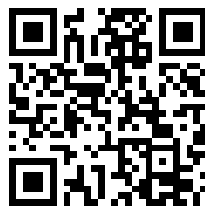

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DOCUMENTS ON
BRITISH
FOREIGN POLICY
1919-1939

EDITED BY
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DOCUMENTS ON BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

1919-1939

First Series, Volume XIII

Turkey

February – December 1920

Arabia, Syria, and Palestine

February 1920 – January 1921

Persia

January 1920 – March 1921

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PREFACE

THIS volume is concerned with the affairs of certain regions of the Near and Middle East, principally in 1920. It is divided into three chapters, each of which continues the documentation of British policy in these regions contained in Chapters II, III, and V of Volume IV in this Series.

Chapter I treats of the affairs of Turkey between February 12 and December 31, 1920. It is dominated by the problems arising from the decisions of the First Conference of London and the Conference of San Remo (recorded in Volumes VII and VIII) concerning the Turkish peace treaty which was eventually signed at Sèvres on August 10, 1920. The grave doubts of H.M. High Commissioner at Constantinople and of the General Staff about the possibility of enforcing the treaty, especially in view of the growth of the Turkish Nationalist movement under Mustapha Kemal Pasha, were voiced in March and April (Nos. 17, 23, and 40). In June the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Hardinge, expressed his conviction that revision of the treaty would be forced on the Allied Governments in a few months' time (No. 86, n. 2); and towards the end of November the Viceroy of India was urging the need for modification in order to conciliate Muslim opinion (No. 186, n. 3), while Admiral de Robeck's successor at Constantinople, Sir H. Rumbold, was reporting (No. 186) that the position of the Nationalists had 'grown so strong' that they would 'count upon revision even after the Central Government had ratified' the Treaty. The unexpected fall in November of the Greek Prime Minister, M. Venizelos, who had been the great advocate of Greek claims upon Turkey, had contributed to this belief, and in December the French President of the Council was informing H.M. Ambassador at Paris 'with some vehemence that nothing would induce the French Government to ratify the Treaty of Sèvres as it stands' (No. 194). Meanwhile, proposals for a revised settlement which a Roumanian emissary claimed to put forward on behalf of Mustapha Kemal had been rejected by His Majesty's Government (No. 132), and the outcome of a mission which the Allied Governments had permitted the Turkish Government to send to Angora (see, e.g., Nos. 145, 160, 189) remained in doubt. When the year 1920 came to an end, despite repeated representations made to them, the Turkish Government had failed to ratify the peace treaty and, although their political and financial situation was more difficult than ever, Sir H. Rumbold reported that they were 'pursuing a policy of passive resistance'. 'The general outlook', he concluded, 'is very obscure and unsatisfactory' (No. 206).

Chapter II relates to British policy towards Arabia, Syria, and Palestine during approximately the same period. The first part contains much

correspondence arising out of the 'difficult position' that confronted Great Britain and France owing to the proclamation at Damascus on March 8, 1920, of an independent Syria with the Emir Feisal as King. The second part, after French forces had in July obliged the Emir to flee, is concerned largely with the frontiers of Palestine with Syria and what was then known as Trans-jordania. Among other topics documented in this Chapter are the desire of His Majesty's Government to improve relations between King Hussein of the Hedjaz and Ibn Saud, the ruler of Nejd, the question of relations with Arab rulers generally, the allocation of responsibility between the Foreign Office and other departments for the control of policy towards different Middle Eastern countries, and the justification of British policy with regard to Near and Middle Eastern oil supplies. The Chapter concludes with a telegram of January 7, 1921, in which Lord Curzon notified Sir H. Samuel, the first Civil Administrator of Palestine, of the Cabinet's decision to hand over the administration of the mandated territories of Mesopotamia and Palestine to the Colonial Office (No. 362).

Chapter III concerns Anglo-Persian relations between January 6, 1920, and March 31, 1921. Despite many fundamental differences, there are some striking analogies between the problems which confronted His Majesty's Government in Persia and those which it met with in Turkey. In each country during this period there is a succession of weak governments and the abdication of the Sovereign himself is contemplated (Nos. 150, 153, 155, 157, 638, 644-5). In each country the government is in financial straits and desires to levy troops, on the one hand to be in a position to meet any danger from forces under Soviet Russian influence and, on the other, to resist the Nationalists who have repudiated its authority. In each country a main concern of His Majesty's representatives is to secure the ratification of a treaty which has either become unpopular or has been so from the start.

From the outset of the period covered in this Chapter Anglo-Persian relations were darkened by the growing shadow of Soviet Russia, whose forces were approaching the Caspian. Their advance towards the frontiers of north Persia imperilled the Anglo-Persian Agreement of August 9, 1919, which still remained 'the corner stone of the policy of His Majesty's Government' (No. 490), but which still had to be ratified and fully implemented. The 'conceivable destruction' of the Agreement by a 'wave of Bolshevism', telegraphed Sir P. Cox, H.M. Acting Minister at Tehran, on May 15, 1920 (No. 431), was a factor 'that none of us could legislate for: but as far as one can at present see ahead agreement will survive this present critical period if His Majesty's Government will give benevolent support to the infant'. A month later, however, the situation had altered considerably for the worse. Soviet Russian forces had landed near Enzeli, the British troops there had been withdrawn, and a 'Red Revolutionary Committee' had declared a Soviet Republic in the province of Gilan. In spite of the appeals addressed to them, His Majesty's Government had been obliged to make clear that they were unable to augment their forces in Persia (No. 433), and requests that they would provide further funds to enable the Persian Government to take

defensive measures had not yet been answered (No. 468). The Persian Prime Minister, Vossugh-ed-Dowleh, who had concluded the Agreement of August 9 and whom Lord Curzon still regarded as 'in a better position to safeguard' it than anyone else (No. 481), had fallen out with the Shah, now back in Persia, and was threatening to resign. In consequence Mr. Norman, the new British Minister at Tehran, viewed 'the prospects of success of British policy in Persia' as 'now very bad indeed. Government . . . have . . . become intensely unpopular and their unpopularity is to a great extent shared by Great Britain' (No. 468).

Vossugh-ed-Dowleh resigned on June 24, 1920, and the remainder of the Chapter illustrates, on the one hand, the misgivings of His Majesty's Government concerning the policies of his successors (e.g. Nos. 531, 533, 553), and on the other, the sustained efforts of Mr. Norman, in negotiations with a series of Persian governments, to try to secure the ratification of the Agreement or to salvage part of it. The ensuing dialogue between London and Tehran was frequently dramatic. But 1920 came to an end without any meeting of the Majlis and early in January 1921 His Majesty's Government decided to withdraw their troops from north Persia (Nos. 631-2) and to regard the Agreement as in abeyance (No. 647). The change in the general situation was further emphasized by the negotiations which resulted in the Persian Government's Treaty of Friendship with Soviet Russia of February 26, 1921. By that time both the Viceroy of India (No. 662) and Sir Percy Cox, now H.M. High Commissioner in Mesopotamia (No. 668), had urged that the Agreement should be dropped, and a new Persian Prime Minister, who came into office as a result of the *coup d'état* engineered by Col. Riza Khan (the future Shah) and his Cossacks, had announced his intention of denouncing the Agreement (No. 686). The Chapter ends with a telegram from Lord Curzon (No. 704) informing Mr. Norman that it was impossible for him to pretend that His Majesty's Government was 'unaffected by these events, or that they can exhibit enthusiasm at result', and with Mr. Norman's report (No. 705) that the Persian Government had officially announced the dissolution of the South Persia Rifles, who were to be transformed into a *gendarmérie*, and that they had also officially requested the assistance of His Majesty's Government in engaging a financial adviser and about ten assistants.

Relevant documents from the personal papers of Lord Curzon, filed in the Foreign Office Archives under reference Confidential/General/363/15-24, have been included in this as in previous volumes. Several Tehran telegrams, containing passages in which the text as received was uncertain, have been checked with those preserved in the archives of H.M. Legation at Tehran (F.O. 248), which are now available. Passages queried in parentheses on documents in the Foreign Office files and found to be similar to or identical with the wording in the copies in the Tehran Legation files have not, however, been annotated (see, e.g., No. 363).

In this volume it will be noticed that in the heading of several documents, especially in Chapters I and III, the file number is followed by an asterisk

(cf. No. 1). This indicates that the text has been taken from Confidential Print (the text printed for confidential use of the Foreign Office), either because, in the case of incoming correspondence, this is the only copy filed or because, in the case of outgoing correspondence, the only other copy preserved is that of the manuscript draft as approved for despatch. Where an outgoing telegram exists both in manuscript and Confidential Print, I have preferred to print the text as presented in Confidential Print, since this is free from the abbreviations often met with in the manuscript versions. At the same time, it must be said that the Confidential Print normally, though not invariably, omits the times of despatch and receipt of telegrams, and that it does not always indicate their degree of urgency. Wherever possible, these details have been added from the manuscript copies of outgoing telegrams or from the printed copies preserved in the relevant telegram books, but each individual addition has not been footnoted. The formula 'Clear the line' has also been reproduced in this volume, where its use occurs, since it denotes a high degree of urgency and was evidently used by some of H.M. Representatives abroad as an alternative to 'Very urgent' or 'Most urgent'.

As in the last two volumes in this series, the titles of some of the main books to which reference is made in the footnotes have been abbreviated. A list of these abbreviations is printed on p. xi.

This volume, like its predecessors, has been edited in accordance with the standing conditions of access to all papers in the Foreign Office archives and of freedom in their selection and arrangement.

I have to thank the Librarian of the Foreign Office, Mr. R. W. Mason, C.M.G., the Acting Deputy Librarian, Mr. W. C. Dalgoutte, M.B.E., and their staff for kindly rendering me much indispensable assistance. I am also most grateful for the invaluable help in the preparation of this volume given by the Assistant Editor (Miss M. E. Lambert, M.A.), Miss I. Bains, M.A., Miss J. Bradley, B.A., and Miss A. J. Fraser, B.A., who drafted the Chapter Summaries.

J. P. T. BURY

November 1962

CONTENTS

	PAGES
CHAPTER I. Turkey: February 12–December 31, 1920 .	1–214
CHAPTER II. Arabia, Syria, and Palestine: February 12, 1920–January 7, 1921	215–428
CHAPTER III. Persia: January 6, 1920–March 31, 1921	429–747

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Aitchison	<i>A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries</i> , compiled by C. U. Aitchison, vol. xi (revised edition, Delhi, 1933).
B.F.S.P.	<i>British and Foreign State Papers</i> (London).
Cmd.	Command Paper (London).
Degras	<i>Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy</i> , selected and edited by Jane Degras, 3 vols. (London, 1951 ff.).
F.R.U.S.	<i>Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States</i> (Washington).
H.C. Deb. 5 s.	<i>Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)</i> , Official Report, 5th Series, House of Commons (London).
I.C.J. Pleadings, Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Case (United Kingdom v. Iran)	International Court of Justice, Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Case (United Kingdom v. Iran), Judgment of July 22nd, 1952.
L/N. O.J.	<i>League of Nations Official Journal</i> .
Rossi	<i>Documenti sull' origine e gli sviluppi della questione araba (1875-1944)</i> (Rome, 1944).

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

CHAPTER I

Turkey

February 12—December 31, 1920

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
1 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 127	Feb. 12	Refers to dangers of Nationalist outbreak against Allies and asks authority to make tranquillizing statement concerning fate of Constantinople and Smyrna.	1
2 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 129	Feb. 13	Reports fear of massacre at Konia and grave situation in interior: Political Officer of the three High Commissioners to visit Grand Vizier and point out responsibility of Central Govt. for acts of Nationalists.	1
3 To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 123	Feb. 16	Refers to No. 1: Allied decision not to deprive Turks of Constantinople may be made public: instructions to add warning on adverse effect on peace terms of continued massacres of Armenians and attacks on Allied troops in Asia Minor.	2
4 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople No. 235	Feb. 17	Summarizes message sent to Grand Vizier, Feb. 5, to counteract Turkish attempt to play off British against French regarding Marash incidents (Vol. IV, No. 681): Grand Vizier noted British declaration of solidarity with French but accused French of fomenting National Movement.	2
5 To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 151	Feb. 22	Instructions to warn Turkish Govt. that attack on Greek positions in Smyrna area would involve counter-attack by Greece and jeopardize position of Turks in peace treaty.	4
6 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople No. 273	Feb. 23	Summarizes statement to M.F.A. on Feb. 19, acting on instructions in No. 3: M.F.A.'s insistence that Govt. was distinct from National Movement: no instructions received by French or Italian colleague to make statement on decision of London Conference regarding Constantinople.	4
7 To M. VENIZELOS (In England)	Feb. 24	Letter from Lord Curzon emphasizing H.M.G.'s desire for maintenance of military <i>status quo</i> in Smyrna area during discussions on peace treaty: Gen. Milne ready to consider specific action if absolutely essential.	8

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
8	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 161	Feb. 25	Transmits decision of London Conference that Allied High Commissioners at Constantinople be instructed not to communicate Allied policy to Turkish Govt. except in concert.	8
9	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 181	Mar. 3	Refers to No. 5: reports M. Venizelos's assurance that military <i>status quo</i> will be maintained and no advance be contemplated without Gen. Milne's authority.	9
10	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 191	Mar. 5	Reports Allied High Commissioners' agreement that (i) recent events in Cilicia should not determine Allied policy, (ii) action in Constantinople contemplated by London Conference (see Vol. VII, No. 38, Appendix) would merely act as irritant to Turks, (iii) naval action off Cilicia would be useless. In case of drastic peace terms British and French High Commissioners advocated Allied occupation of Constantinople and strong action against Nationalist leaders: this policy not supported by Italian High Commissioner: each High Commissioner to report separately.	9
11	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. Unnumbered	Mar. 5	Reports French Govt.'s fears of consequences of proposed Allied occupation of Constantinople.	10
12	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 192	Mar. 5	Situation complicated by resignation of Turkish Cabinet and difficulty of forming new one: impossibility of satisfying both Nationalists and Allies increasingly evident.	11
13	To FRENCH AMBASSADOR London	Mar. 5	Letter from Lord Curzon referring to M. Millerand's request for details of alleged independent pro-Turkish actions in Constantinople of French Govt. high officials: details enclosed. States authoritative information received of French encouragement of propaganda in Palestine against Zionist cause and in favour of Syrian unity: regrets this situation.	11
14	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 201	Mar. 7	Refers to No. 10 and summarizes draft which formed basis of French High Commissioner's tel. to Paris on proposed Allied action in Constantinople.	14
15	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 204	Mar. 8	Refers to F.O. tel. No. 187 of Mar. 6 (see Vol. VII, No. 50, Appendix) and reports preliminary reply. Asks urgently whether in light of High Commissioners' telegrams London Conference maintains instructions for occupation of Constantinople. Gen. Milne ready to act at request of High Commissioners: press leakage of Allies' intention disconcerting.	16
16	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 197	Mar. 9	Asks what steps taken to act on instructions in F.O. tel. No. 187 of Mar. 6: suggestions in No. 14 being considered.	17

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
17 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople	Mar. 9	Letter to Lord Curzon expressing strong disapproval of proposed cession of Smyrna and Thrace to Greece and giving his views on terms which should be imposed on Turkey.	17
18 MR. KERR London	Mar. 9	Encloses note on his interview on Mar. 8 with M. Venizelos concerning enforcement of Turkish peace treaty.	20
19 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 210	Mar. 10	Reports on meeting of High Commissioners on Mar. 9 to discuss procedure and date of occupation of Constantinople: identic telegrams to be sent to Govts. on possible consequences of decision to impose suggested peace terms.	21
20 To MR. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 269	Mar. 12	Transmits account of Lord Curzon's interview with U.S. Ambassador on Mar. 6 when latter was informed of recent events in Turkey and Asia Minor and the Allied decision to occupy Constantinople.	22
21 To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 221	Mar. 13	Asks why action not yet taken on military occupation of Constantinople: authorizes him to instruct Gen. Milne to act alone if necessary.	24
22 To FRENCH AMBASSADOR London	Mar. 13	Letter from Lord Curzon summarizing tel. No. 220 from Admiral de Robeck reporting delay in occupation of Constantinople due to instructions received by French High Commissioner: emphasizes danger of delay and informs him of instructions in No. 21.	25
23 GENERAL STAFF War Office	Mar. 15	Memo. on the situation in Turkey and probable effects of proposed peace terms.	26
24 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 238	Mar. 16	Reports Allied occupation of Constantinople on Mar. 16, procedures followed, and authorization by High Commissioners of communiqué explaining reasons for, and scope of, action.	38
25 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 245	Mar. 17	Reports assumption of control in Adrianople by Turkish Commander in Thrace (Col. Jaffar Tayar) and his intention to set up independent government.	40
26 To EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 955	Mar. 17	Transmits account of conversation on Mar. 17 between Lord Curzon and M. Cambon concerning conflict of military authority in Constantinople and position of Gen. Franchet d'Esperey, whose withdrawal Lord Curzon recommended.	41
27 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 247	Mar. 18	Reports receipt of protest note from Grand Vizier against Allied occupation of Constantinople and summarizes text.	43
28 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 263	Mar. 21	Explains reasons for issue of communiqué on Mar. 16: reports excellent effect in Constantinople and estimates its probable effect on Nationalist leaders.	43
29 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 262	Mar. 21	Transmits translation of French text of Allied High Commissioners' communiqué of Mar. 16.	44

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
30 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 276	Mar. 24	Reports reservations of French and Italian High Commissioners in respect of inter-allied controls to be set up in Constantinople: Gen. Milne's directive only accepted provisionally.	46
31 To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 248	Mar. 25	H.M.G. unable to incur financial liability for food supplies for Constantinople: these should be obtained locally.	47
32 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 285	Mar. 25	Stresses inadvisability of further delays in Turkish peace treaty: explains why present moment favourable for presentation of terms: outlines advantages of moderate terms, especially regarding Smyrna and Adrianople: asks for information on trend of negotiations.	47
33 To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 254	Mar. 26	Asks whether Said Abdul Kadir or other Kurdish spokesmen should be consulted on future of Kurdistan: H.M.G.'s present aim is autonomy.	49
34 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 302	Mar. 29	Refers to No. 33: expresses doubt on Kurdistan independence or autonomy: suggests hearing views of representatives chosen by Kurd Club in Constantinople: emphasizes need for Anglo-French co-operation.	49
35 To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 260	Mar. 30	Refers to No. 32: there has been no avoidable delay in peace treaty: impossible at present to hold out to Turkish Govt. suggested prospect of moderate peace terms.	50
36 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 309	Mar. 30	Reports exchanges between Allied High Commissioners and Grand Vizier concerning demand for Govt. disavowal of Mustapha Kemal and Nationalist leaders: no satisfactory formula yet found.	51
37 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 310	Mar. 30	Discusses Turkish Govt.'s attitude since Mar. 16 and possible alternatives if it falls: prefers govt. openly opposed to Nationalists if presentation of peace terms still to be delayed, but considers no Grand Vizier could accept present proposed terms except after armed resistance.	52
38 To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 407 To SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 119	Apr. 1	Instructions to ascertain views of French/Italian Govt. on High Commissioners' request for authorization to grant import permits for foodstuffs from Bulgaria to Constantinople: H.M.G. propose to agree.	53
39 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 317	Apr. 1	Considers massacres of Christians almost inevitable if Turkish Thrace or Smyrna be assigned to Greeks: suggests actions that might give some protection.	53
40 GENERAL STAFF War Office	Apr. 1	Memo. on Turkish peace treaty and inadequacy of military resources to impose proposed peace terms: loss of Turkish goodwill will make establishment of Armenian State impracticable: curbing of Greek ambitions is essential: expresses hope that revision of terms still possible.	54

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
41	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 283	Apr. 3	Turkish Govt. should be instructed to remind Mustapha Kemal that his associates under arrest will be held as hostages for Armenians in Cilicia.	57
42	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 328	Apr. 3	Refers to No. 36 and reports Govt. resignation on Apr. 2 followed by further exchanges on disavowal of Nationalists.	57
43	TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR London	Apr. 4	Note from Lord Curzon restating H.M.G.'s views on solution of deadlock over command at Constantinople: refers to memo. of Mar. 18 returned by Ambassador and states no French Govt. proposals yet received.	58
44	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 333	Apr. 5	Asks for instructions in event of arrival of M. Joffe, reported to have been selected as Soviet Russian representative. Reports plan to send Soviet commercial mission to Constantinople on conclusion of Allied and Soviet trade negotiations.	59
45	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 340	Apr. 5	Reports formation of non-party govt. by Ferid Pasha: summarizes Imperial Decree appointing new Grand Vizier which condemned National movement and prescribed cordial relations with Entente Powers.	59
46	MR. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 253	Apr. 5	Reports publication on Apr. 5 of summary of Gen. Harbord's Report and summarizes main recommendations concerning Turkey and Armenia.	60
47	SIR G. GRAHAME Paris No. 1072	Apr. 5	Reports conversation with M. Millerand who stated that Gen. Franchet d'Esperey had gone on long leave and that appointment of British presidents to Control Commissions at Constantinople displeased French and Italian Govts.	60
48	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 372	Apr. 11	Reports Ferid Pasha's request to know how far Allies will support his Govt. in repressing Nationalists: states principles he proposes to follow in dealing with question.	61
49	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 334	Apr. 14	Refers to No. 44: High Commissioners should warn Turkish Govt. that no Soviet representative will be allowed in Constantinople.	62
50	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 390	Apr. 15	Reports Govt. pronouncements on Apr. 10 against Nationalists: has promised assistance in bringing them to knowledge of people in interior: Parliament dissolved Apr. 12: new elections promised within four months: considers striking developments in interior not improbable.	62
51	ADMIRAL WEBB Constantinople Tel. No. 419	Apr. 20	Reports information received by British, Italian and Greek High Commissioners of serious situation at Adana and need to protect fellow citizens.	63

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
52	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 355	Apr. 20	Refers to No. 48 and approves proposals for supporting Turkish Govt. subject to (1) use of Turkish regulars wherever possible instead of irregulars, (2) not leading Ferid Pasha to expect lenient treaty.	63
53	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 483	Apr. 22	Instructions to ask French Govt. what steps they are taking to meet situation described in No. 51 and to urge necessity for action.	64
54	ADMIRAL WEBB Constantinople Tel. No. 429	Apr. 23	Discusses effect on anti-Nationalists of (1) defeat of Anzavour in Panderma area, (2) Jaffar Tayar's abandonment of extreme attitude (cf. No. 25), (3) announcement of drastic peace terms. Warns against use of Greek army to enforce peace terms in Thrace and Anatolia.	64
55	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 499	Apr. 24	Refers to No. 53 and reports French Govt.'s reply.	65
56	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. Unnumbered	Apr. 24	From Lord Curzon (San Remo): informs of peace treaty provisions for local autonomy in Kurdish areas; deprecates unprovoked attacks by Kurds on Turkish Nationalists.	65
57	SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 307	Apr. 29	Reports (1) unfavourable reaction by Congress and press to report of possible offer to U.S. of Armenian mandate, (2) his public denial of press reports of Allied dissensions at San Remo Conference, (3) working up of anti-British feeling, based on alleged militarism and Great Britain's capturing control of Middle East oilfields.	66
58	MUSTAPHA KEMAL PASHA Angora	Apr. 30	Note informing Lord Curzon of Supreme National Assembly's meeting in Angora, the formation of an Executive Committee, and the resolutions adopted on Apr. 23.	67
59	TO ADMIRAL WEBB Constantinople Tel. No. 406	May 5	Instructions to advise Turkish Govt. to accept peace terms and put empire left to them in order: British guidance and support available.	68
60	ADMIRAL WEBB Constantinople Tel. No. 565	May 11	Reports conversation with Grand Vizier on May 10 in accordance with No. 59: asks further guidance on part H.M.G. expects to play in Turkey after signature of peace.	68
61	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 568	May 11	Reports handing of peace terms to Turkish Delegation whose comments must be received within a month.	70
62	SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 336	May 11	Reports alleged desire of President and Secretary of State to force U.S. to undertake mandate for Turkey and to share in control of Straits: describes steps supposed to have been taken to promote this scheme and gives his own views: scheme to be discussed on May 18 at meeting attended by President, Secretary of State and others.	70

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
63	SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 364	May 16	Refers to No. 62: transmits draft proposals relating to Armenia to be considered on May 18: asks for instructions.	71
64	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 596	May 17	Reports on reception of peace terms—calm and depression in Constantinople: outlines events in Angora up to May 3: Central Govt. without control over Nationalists there and in most of Asia Minor.	73
65	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 446	May 17	Summarizes French Ambassador's complaints about British preponderance on Control Commissions and movement of Turkish forces without consultation with Commissions: asks for comments.	74
66	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome No. 465	May 17	Informs of reasons given by Lord Curzon, in conversation with Italian Chargé d'Affaires, for H.M.G.'s non-signature of projected Tripartite Agreement, and of Lord Curzon's advice to Italian Govt. to curb their anxiety to acquire coal from Asia Minor.	74
67	SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 373	May 18	Refers to No. 63, and reports further conversation with Secretary of State: President stated to be in favour of U.S. assuming responsibility for Constantinople as well as Armenia.	76
68	TO SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 465	May 21	Refers to No. 63: H.M.G. would welcome U.S. co-operation in support of Armenian Republic.	77
69	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 621	May 24	Refers to Nos. 65 and 30 and outlines current working of Control Commissions: suggests French Ambassador be informed of danger and impossibility of divided authority in present unsettled conditions. President of War Office Commission has told French and Italian members they are not under Gen. Milne's orders: considers this an impossible position.	77
70	TO ADMIRAL WEBB Constantinople Tel. No. 471	May 26	Informs of Admiralty's agreement to have Allied men-of-war stationed at all coast towns to give security to Christians in interior.	78
71	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 630	June 2	Instructions to ask French Govt. for facts concerning news of imminent withdrawal from Cilicia and alleged advice to Armenians to come to terms with Turks.	78
72	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 236	June 2	Instructions to suggest Italian Govt. accept Porte's request for extension to July 11 of time for reply to peace terms. <i>Note 2. Extension granted until June 26.</i>	79
73	SIR G. GRAHAME Paris Tel. No. 657	June 3	Refers to No. 71: French Govt. deny any question of withdrawal from Cilicia.	79
74	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 651	June 3	Reports arrival of Italian division in Constantinople area and Italian desire to have zone on Asiatic side of Bosphorus: points out objections and suggests alternative.	79

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
75	SIR G. GRAHAME Paris Tel. No. 663	June 4	Explains circumstances leading to suspension of hostilities for twenty days between Mustapha Kemal's troops and French in Cilicia.	80
76	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 654	June 4	Confirms report of armistice between French and Nationalist troops.	81
77	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 506	June 5	Transmits reply of H.M. The King to Sultan's appeal of May 27 for his intervention to alleviate severity of peace terms.	81
78	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 681	June 10	Grand Vizier leaving for Paris on June 12. Reports conversation with him on June 9 concerning peace terms: latter's urgent appeal for revision of terms, and enquiries whether H.M.G. would support Turkey and whether Greece had been told not to invade Thrace before signature of peace.	81
79	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 682	June 10	Reports intended withdrawal of Turkish troops from Ismid area and arrangements being made to maintain Allied naval and military control of this key area: considers French and Italian Govts. should provide troops and asks for definite orders from H.M.G.	83
80	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 683	June 10	Reports further on conversation in No. 78: Grand Vizier emphasized his desire for British support of future Turkey, and for contact with a British representative at peace conference to whom he could speak confidentially. Suggests that any modifications in peace treaty terms should be represented as concession to Sultan: gives reasons.	84
81	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 701	June 13	Has informed French and Italian colleagues of Gen. Milne's view that peace treaty should be signed before Grand Vizier authorized to form force to suppress Nationalist movement.	85
82	SIR G. GRAHAME Paris Tel. No. 712	June 15	Reports that Secretary-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs doubts whether Turkey will sign peace treaty and is practically certain French Chamber would not ratify it as it stands.	86
83	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 706	June 15	Reports hostilities with Nationalist forces at Gulf of Ismid: army must be strongly reinforced immediately.	86
84	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 708	June 16	Lists points relating to Constantinople and the Straits needing immediate decision of H.M.G.	86
85	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 555	June 16	Refers to No. 81: agrees with Gen. Milne's view.	87
86	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 713	June 17	Transmits translation of telegrams being sent by Allied Commissioners to their Govts. on Nationalist threat to Constantinople and Dardanelles, and on choice	87

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		between breaking-off armistice and renewing war or opening negotiations for maintenance of treaty in modified form: identic instructions asked for.	
87 To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 722 To SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 265	June 21	Refers to No. 79 and urges French and Italian Govts. to co-operate in defence of Ismid peninsula and to send reinforcements.	89
88 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 732	June 23	Refers to equivocal relations of Italians and some French officers and others with Nationalists: suggests that French and Italian Govts. be asked to withdraw their officers and agents in areas under Nationalist control.	89
89 SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 264	June 23	Reports action taken on No. 87: President of Council's regret that no troops available for that purpose.	90
90 EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 752	June 23	French Govt.'s reply to request in No. 87: considers intermingling of British, French and Italian troops inconvenient and difficult: suggests British troops should defend Ismid peninsula and Bosphorus on Asiatic side, French troops Constantinople on European side: asks for H.M.G.'s views.	91
91 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 736	June 23	Reports conversation with Reshid Bey and Jemil Pasha, members of peace delegation to Paris, to whom he pointed out need to satisfy Allies that legitimate Turkish Govt. had no connexion with Nationalists: they denounced Nationalists, urged a just peace, and hoped future Turkey would be placed under British aegis. Informs that Reshid Bey suspected of intrigues against Ferid Pasha: believes French would welcome replacement of Ferid by Reshid Bey.	91
92 To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 741	June 25	Transmits personal message from Prime Minister to President of Council in reply to No. 90. H.M.G. unable willingly to abandon principle of unity of command in Constantinople area: asks French Govt. to agree to British general exercising supreme command there until peace with Turkey established.	93
93 To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 742 To SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 275	June 26	Refers to No. 88: instructions to urge Govts. to withdraw all officers and agents in areas under Nationalist control in communication with Nationalists.	94
94 ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 751	June 26	Gives reasons for not accepting French proposals in No. 90.	95
95 To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 581	June 26	Refers to No. 86, and points out that instructions in No. 87 imply forcible suppression of pro-Nationalist movement in Constantinople.	95

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
96	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 770	June 27	Summarizes President of Council's reply to No. 92 stating conditions in which French Govt. could agree to a British general being entrusted with supreme military command in Constantinople area.	96
97	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 795	July 8	Greek C.-in-C. has received orders from M. Venizelos to occupy E. Thrace, transferring troops from Asia Minor for the purpose: gives reasons for considering plan rash and ill-advised.	97
98	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome No. 643	July 10	Informs of conversations, during Spa Conference, with Italian M.F.A. on alleged Italian intrigues in Near and Middle East against Allied policy and interests: Count Sforza personally friendly.	98
99	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 829	July 17	Reports return of peace delegation and conversation with Grand Vizier: thinks he is resigned to signing peace treaty and trying to convert others but this attitude mainly confined to <i>Entente libérale</i> party: Sultan probably leans towards signature.	101
100	MR. FITZMAURICE Foreign Office	July 21	Memo. on release of Turkish prisoners at Malta: arguments against their release at present time.	103
101	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 839	July 22	Refers to No. 99: considers signature of treaty almost certain: Turkish military authorities instructed not to resist Greeks in E. Thrace: continued resistance of extreme Nationalists expected in Asia Minor, with hope of Soviet assistance now that Batum evacuated and Armenia isolated.	105
102	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 858	July 28	Reports fall of Adrianople to Greeks: transmits military and political arguments against proposed renewal of Greek advance in Asia Minor: suggests French Govt.'s support of proposal is based on favourable effect it would have on their position in Cilicia.	106
103	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 861	July 28	Asks for H.M.G.'s views on proposals put forward in Apr. to use Kurdish tribes to attack Turkish Nationalists (cf. No. 56).	108
104	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 332	July 28	Informs of Greek Govt.'s refusal to sign Turkish peace treaty because Italian Govt. refuse to carry out 1919 Tittoni-Venizelos Agreement relating to cession of Dodecanese to Greece: Greek action has led H.M.G. to withhold signature of Tripartite Agreement.	108
105	SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 317	July 29	Reports conversation with M.F.A. who explained Italian Govt.'s attitude to Dodecanese question.	109
106	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 705	July 30	Refers to No. 102: informs that proposed renewed Greek advance was discussed at Spa: M. Venizelos being consulted: points out advantages to Turkish Govt. of defeat of Mustapha Kemal.	110

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
107	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 341	July 30	Refers to No. 105 and explains H.M.G.'s attitude towards Dodecanese dispute: instructions to urge Italian Govt. to find solution.	110
108	EARL GRANVILLE Athens No. 317	July 30	Describes reception of news of Greek successes in E. Thrace: British prestige and popularity stand high.	112
109	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 708	July 31	Refers to No. 103: H.M.G. unable to accept suggestion at present.	113
110	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 876	Aug. 1	Reports composition and character of new Cabinet, again headed by Ferid Pasha: considers only Ferid can carry through signature and ratification of treaty.	113
111	SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. Unnumbered	Aug. 1	Reports conversation with M.F.A. in sense of Nos. 104 and 107, and compromise terms agreed to by M.F.A.: hopes settlement possible as further Italian concessions unlikely.	114
112	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Naples Tel. No. 350	Aug. 3	Informs of conversations on Dodecanese question in which Lord Curzon told Italian Ambassador H.M.G. unable to promise not to cede Cyprus to Greece without prior agreement with Italy, added that cession not at present under consideration, and advised Italian Govt. to end dispute with M. Venizelos and sign Turkish peace treaty.	115
113	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 717	Aug. 4	Approves High Commissioners' proposal to recommend to Govt. despatch of Turkish mission to Anatolia to explain military situation and desirability of accepting peace treaty.	116
114	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 719	Aug. 4	Approves proposed visit of High Commissioners to Sultan after signature of treaty.	117
115	TO EARL GRANVILLE Athens No. 406	Aug. 5	Informs of conversation with M. Venizelos on Dodecanese dispute: H.M.G. prepared not to sign Tripartite Agreement until question settled, but unable to express opinion on rival claims: M. Venizelos ready to resume negotiations with Italian Govt.	117
116	TO SIR G. GRAHAME Paris Tel. No. 879	Aug. 6	Informs of conversation with M. Venizelos on Aug. 5 (see No. 115): instructions to explain to M. Millerand arrangements for partial signature of peace treaty on Aug. 7, and to discuss with him question of disclosing to Turkish delegates existence of Tripartite Agreement.	119
117	SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. Unnumbered	Aug. 7	Reports further conversation with M.F.A. on Dodecanese dispute: obstacles to agreement: Italy has no intention of forcing Greece to abandon her claims in S. Albania.	120

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
118	SIR G. GRAHAME Paris Tel. No. 943	Aug. 9	Reports settlement of Italo-Greek dispute and M. Venizelos's thanks for H.M.G.'s support. <i>Note 2.</i> Turkish peace treaty and Tripartite agreement signed at Sèvres on Aug. 10.	121
119	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 747	Aug. 12	Informs of intention to revert to normal procedure and appoint diplomatic officer, Mr. Max Muller, as High Commissioner: H.M.G. regret loss of Admiral de Robeck's valuable services.	122
120	To EARL GRANVILLE Athens Tel. No. 137	Aug. 12	Instructions to request Greek Govt. to postpone order, issued by Greek military authorities in Smyrna, imposing forced circulation of drachma at 13½ piastres, as all Allied Powers equally interested in measures affecting Turkish credit.	122
121	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 911	Aug. 12	Stresses need for early ratification of peace treaty to stabilize Turkish situation and minimise risk of collaboration between Turkish Nationalists and Soviet Russians.	123
122	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople No. 647	Aug. 20	Transmits a memo. by Law Officers of the Crown on Turkish prisoners at Malta: asks for views on possibility of releasing persons accused of ill-treatment of prisoners of war, and an exchange of Turkish prisoners for Britons detained by Nationalists.	124
123	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople No. 1191	Aug. 23	Reports that Sultan accorded audiences to High Commissioners on Aug. 21: gives personal impressions and summary of conversation with Sultan who asked for special support from Great Britain.	125
124	To H.M. REPRESENTA- TIVES Paris Tel. No. 945 Rome Tel. No. 378 Tokyo Tel. No. 286	Aug. 25	Instructions to consult Govt. to which accredited on acceptance of Turkish representatives as Chargés d'Affaires pending ratification of treaty: trusts Allies will act only after consultation and in common: informs of H.M.G.'s proposal (see No. 119).	128
125	MR. HENDERSON Paris Tel. No. 1033	Aug. 27	Transmits French Govt.'s reply to No. 124: willing to receive Turkish representative as Chargé d'Affaires: gives reasons for French proposal to give personal rank of Ambassador to present High Commissioner.	128
126	To MR. HENDERSON Paris Tel. No. 960	Aug. 27	Informs of conversations with Italian Ambassador and French Minister concerning unilateral Italian decision to appoint an ambassador at Constantinople: instructions to ascertain M. Millerand's view and to emphasize H.M.G.'s objections: if supported by French Govt., H.M.G. willing to bring utmost pressure to bear upon Italian Govt.	129

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
127	SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 363	Aug. 27	Refers to No. 124 and reports M.F.A.'s reasons for decision to appoint ambassador at Constantinople on ratification of treaty: previous consultation with Allied Govts. not considered necessary.	130
128	TO FRENCH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES London	Aug. 27	H.M.G.'s views on French Govt.'s proposals in note of Aug. 20: not in favour of entrusting Ambassadors' Conference with decisions on execution of Turkish treaty, prefers ordinary diplomatic procedure: agrees to immediate organization of military force provided for in treaty and despatch of Turkish mission to Anatolia.	130
129	MR. HENDERSON Paris Tel. No. 1037	Aug. 28	Reports attitude of French Govt. towards appointment of ambassadors at Constantinople: willing to join H.M.G. in protest suggested in No. 126 but considers ambassadorial rank eventually inevitable.	131
130	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 972	Aug. 28	Transmits identic tel. from Allied High Commissioners to Govts. describing Turkey's precarious financial situation and suggesting short-term palliatives: urges immediate despatch of Allied representatives on proposed Financial Commission.	132
131	TO MR. HENDERSON Paris No. 2957 TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome No. 803	Sept. 1	Informs of recommendations, made by an interdepartmental conference on Aug. 23, in connection with presidencies of Inter-Allied Commissions of Control to be set up under Turkish peace treaty: reasons for not leaving these decisions to Ambassadors' Conference: instructions to report views of Govt.	133
132	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome No. 808 TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople No. 701	Sept. 3	Informs of M. Stern's offer to mediate peace between H.M.G. and Mustapha Kemal and its refusal by H.M.G.: considers mission not unconnected with Italian policy in Near East and may be forerunner of other Turkish attempts to evade obligations of treaty.	135
133	TO SIR C. ELIOT Tokyo Tel. No. 298	Sept. 7	Refers to No. 124: instructions to inform Japanese Govt. of proposed appointment of Allied ambassadors at Constantinople, mainly because of importance of Allied Control Commissions there.	137
134	TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 409	Sept. 7	Instructions to urge Italian Govt. to withhold title of Chargé d'Affaires from Turkish unofficial agent pending ratification of treaty, as agreed by H.M.G. and French Govt.	137
135	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1003	Sept. 10	Refers to No. 130 and re-emphasizes Turkey's desperate financial situation: suggests advance of money by Allied Powers may be only alternative to collapse of administration, the serious consequences of which he indicates.	138
136	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1004	Sept. 10	Refers to No. 135 and discusses effect of Turkey's financial position on Ferid Pasha's position.	139

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
137	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 845	Sept. 16	Informs that H.M.G. consider creation of Turkish gendarmerie a matter of urgency: instructions to concert with colleagues in preliminary steps.	140
138	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 860	Sept. 17	Refers to War Office report concerning messages from Gen. Kiazim Pasha suggesting interview on Black Sea coast to seek an undertaking between moderate Nationalists and Turkish Govt.: instructions to take any action deemed desirable after consultation with Gen. Wilson.	140
139	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople	Sept. 19	Letter from Lord Curzon agreeing that Ferid Pasha must not be given ground for claiming that H.M.G. would support any change in Turkish constitution at present: informs that official of higher rank being substituted for Mr. Max Muller. <i>Note 2.</i> Sir H. Rumbold appointed H.M. Ambassador at Constantinople, with title of High Commissioner, on Nov. 1.	141
140	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 869	Sept. 20	States that no sale of Turkish war material can take place at present, and asks for report on nature and value of other stores to disposal of which his Allied colleagues have been authorized to assent.	141
141	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 865	Sept. 21	Explains that Turkish war material can only be disposed of by the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control.	142
142	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1050	Sept. 23	Reports (1) renewal, following resignation on Sept. 19 of Sheikh-ul-Islam and Minister of Commerce, of amnesty for all except leaders of Nationalist movement, (2) Turkish Govt.'s note reviewing situation and containing requests considered impracticable by High Commissioners, (3) decision to suggest mission to Anatolia to Grand Vizier (cf. No. 113), and Grand Vizier's suggestion that Allied representatives accompany mission: details to be discussed Sept. 24.	142
143	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 880	Sept. 23	H.M.G. have no objection to Grand Vizier's raising forces at his disposal to 15,000: Inter-Allied Commanders can act provisionally for Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control.	144
144	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople No. 1349	Sept. 28	Transmits memo. by Political Officer on Nationalist movement in Anatolia: considers mission should be sent to give true facts of Turkey's present position but prospects have deteriorated owing to change in attitude of Grand Vizier.	144
145	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 908	Sept. 30	Confirms H.M.G.'s desire for execution of treaty as signed: considers ratification should precede despatch of mission but will endorse alternative policy if Allied Commissioners decide upon it.	150

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
146	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 3257	Sept. 30	Informs of H.M.G.'s views concerning authority of commissions to be set up at Constantinople: hopes French Govt. will agree to principle of subordinating commissions to general authority of Allied ambassadors.	151
147	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1065	Oct. 1	Refers to No. 148 and asks for authority to tell Ferid Pasha that H.M.G. could not tolerate action against his person or that of Sultan should Govt. with Nationalist leanings take power.	151
148	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1064	Oct. 1	Reports (1) Ferid Pasha's attitude towards suggested mission to Anatolia, (2) Gen. Wilson's doubts concerning forcible repression of Nationalists, (3) French High Commissioner's opposition to retention in power of Ferid Pasha. Summarizes programme to which he has reluctantly agreed: (a) High Commissioners to urge Turkish Govt. to send mission, (b) to intimate mission has no prospect of success if present Govt. continues in power, (c) to communicate views to Sultan through Tewfik Pasha.	152
149	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 3260	Oct. 1	Refers to French note concerning proposed mission to Anatolia: instructions to inform French Govt. of H.M.G.'s opinion that Turkish ratification of peace treaty should precede despatch of mission: only if present Grand Vizier refuses should question of a successor be considered.	153
150	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. Unnumbered	Oct. 4	Refers to No. 147 and reports confidential statement by Grand Vizier that Sultan might abdicate rather than work with a pro-Nationalist Govt., also Ferid's opinion that next Govt. would oppose ratification of treaty. Summarizes message he is sending to Ferid Pasha, and asks whether in event of Sultan's abdication he should aid him to leave Turkey.	154
151	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1075	Oct. 4	Explains circumstances leading to provisional control of Turkish expenditure by Public Debt Administration: has impressed on Grand Vizier that measure is a mere palliative: High Commissioners urge immediate appointment of French and Italian members of proposed Financial Commission and identic instructions on representations to Turkish Govt. concerning its formation and functions.	155
152	M. VENIZELOS Athens Tel. Unnumbered	Oct. 5	Tel. to Mr. Lloyd George giving his views on Anatolian situation and arguments in favour of renewed Greek advance against Nationalists: decision urgent as alternative is demobilization of army.	157

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
153	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 928	Oct. 6	Approves assurance and message to Grand Vizier in Nos. 147 and 150: instructions to impress on Sultan that he should not abdicate.	158
154	To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 1077 To MR. KENNARD Rome Tel. No. 466	Oct. 8	Refers to precarious financial state of Turkish Govt. and need for setting-up of Financial Commission: Sir A. Block to be British representative: instructions to urge immediate appointment of French/Italian representative and to obtain views of Govt. on instructions to be given to High Commissioners.	158
155	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. Unnumbered	Oct. 15	Refers to No. 153 and reports conversation on Oct. 11 with Sultan who said change of Cabinet would sooner or later involve advent of Nationalist Govt. and consequently his own abdication.	159
156	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1108	Oct. 15	Transmits views on securing release of British prisoners in Nationalist hands.	159
157	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 987	Oct. 20	Refers to No. 155: instruction to lose no opportunity of dissuading Sultan from abdication.	160
158	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1121	Oct. 20	Reports conversation with Tewfik Pasha (Ferid Pasha's successor) on Turkey's immediate financial needs and suggests procedure should be: (1) to press for Govt.'s ratification of treaty, (2) to set up Financial Commission, (3) to apply financial clauses of treaty in anticipation of Allied ratifications.	160
159	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1139	Oct. 22	New Cabinet of moderate Nationalist leanings took office Oct. 21: Izzet Pasha, Minister of the Interior.	162
160	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 999	Oct. 23	Inform of reasons for considering Turkey's ratification of peace treaty to be next essential step: H.M.G. would prefer not to send Allied representative with mission to Anatolia but will leave final decision to High Commissioners.	162
161	To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 1129	Oct. 23	Refers to No. 160: H.M.G. in general agreement with instructions to French High Commissioner, except as regards advance of money: next step is to secure Turkish ratification of peace treaty: H.M.G. hope to ratify in present session: instructions to urge early French ratification.	163
162	To MR. KENNARD Rome Tel. No. 479	Oct. 23	Instructions to ascertain prospects of Italian ratification of Turkish treaty and to urge early action.	163
163	To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 1143	Oct. 26	Instructions to communicate to French Govt. Admiral de Robeck's arguments in favour of Allied delegates accompanying mission to Anatolia, and to urge their agreement.	164

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
164	TO ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1014	Oct. 26	Question of release of British prisoners should be taken up with Nationalists by any British delegate with mission to Anatolia.	164
165	TO MR. KENNARD Rome No. 967	Oct. 26	Instructions to draw M.F.A.'s attention once more to anti-British propaganda in Italian Press, especially to Signor Coppola's article referring again to existence of a secret Anglo-Turkish agreement despite official denial in May.	165
166	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1157	Oct. 28	Reports (1) collective note handed to Grand Vizier on Oct. 25 demanding immediate ratification of treaty, (2) Govt.'s statement of policy which involves, first, attempt at conciliation with Nationalists, then, summoning of Parliament and ratification of peace treaty: has argued strongly for immediate ratification but without success: Sultan supports Govt.'s proposals.	165
167	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 1175 TO MR. KENNARD Rome Tel. No. 484	Oct. 30	Summarizes proposals agreed with War Office concerning organization and duties of Military Commission to be established under Turkish treaty: asks for agreement of French/Italian Govt.	167
168	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 1190 TO MR. KENNARD Rome Tel. No. 488	Nov. 3	Refers to No. 166: H.M.G. consider immediate ratification should be insisted on: some compromise being devised on constitutional questions and proposed mission to Nationalists being postponed until ratification secured. Instructions to ask French/Italian Govt. to instruct representatives at Constantinople accordingly.	168
169	MR. LINDSAY Paris Tel. No. 1289	Nov. 5	Transmits French Govt.'s reply to No. 163: they cannot agree to Allied delegates accompanying mission unless treaty immediately ratified, participation needed to avert collapse of negotiations with Nationalists.	168
170	SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 481	Nov. 6	Reports conversation with M.F.A. who said that Signor de Martino, recently appointed Italian Ambassador at London, would exercise salutary influence on Italian press: M.F.A. considered reports of Italian agents' sympathies with Turkish Nationalists unfounded or exaggerated, and later gave written assurances that no Italian civil or military missions or agents were with Mustapha Kemal.	169
171	COL. STOKES Tiflis Tel. No. 480	Nov. 6	Moment opportune for securing friendship of Turks or Soviet Russians, rivals for control of Azerbaijan: advantages and disadvantages of each course: suggests contact could be established from Tiflis with Mustapha Kemal.	170

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
172	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1173	Nov. 8	Refers to No. 166 and reports High Commissioners' efforts to secure ratification of treaty and Govt.'s desire for concessions to placate Nationalists: Govt. have decided, in principle, to send mission to Nationalists but question of Allied participation has lapsed.	170
173	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1189	Nov. 10	Transmits (1) extracts from Govt.'s reply of Nov. 4 to High Commissioners' note of Oct. 25 (see No. 166), (2) text of identic telegram from High Commissioners to their govts. concerning situation and reply to be made to Turkish Govt.	172
174	ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1190	Nov. 10	Comments on deterioration of situation since despatch of No. 173: recent Soviet and Kemalist successes have destroyed hope of peaceful Nationalist acceptance of peace treaty: force may be needed, but Allied forces seriously depleted.	174
175	To ADMIRAL DE ROBECK Constantinople Tel. No. 1103	Nov. 17	Approves reply to Turkish Govt. in No. 173 with additional warning on possible Allied demand for unfavourable revision of treaty as result of Nationalist attack on Armenia.	175
176	To SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome No. 1036	Nov. 19	Informs of conversation on Nov. 11 between Sir E. Crowe and Italian Ambassador, who denied presence of Italian mission with Nationalists, proposed to ask for interview with Lord Curzon to clear misunderstandings, and appealed unsuccessfully for aid in securing Anglo-Italian engagement whereby Britain would not alienate Cyprus without previous Italian approval.	175
177	SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople No. 1542	Nov. 20	Refers to No. 122 and submits his own, and Gen. Milne's, observations on Turkish prisoners at Malta.	177
178	SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1227	Nov. 21	Transmits tel. from British Vice-Consul at Smyrna recording conversation with Greek High Commissioner there: new Greek Govt. proposes no changes in foreign policy: disaster would follow Anglo-Greek disagreement: general situation quiet but attitude of army doubtful.	180
179	SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1228	Nov. 22	Refers to No. 178 and transmits later, less optimistic, telegrams from Smyrna: lack of army discipline: Gen. Papoulas appointed C.-in-C.: local fear of abandonment of Smyrna to Turkey.	181
180	SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1232	Nov. 22	Reports suspected pro-Kemalist activities of Italians in Constantinople, and instances of Nationalists' favourable attitude towards Italy.	182
181	GENERAL STAFF War Office	Nov. 22	Memo. on military situation created by recent events in Russia, Caucasasia, Turkey, and Greece: concludes with consideration of advantages of drastic revision of territorial terms of Turkish peace treaty.	183

XXX

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
182 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1239	Nov. 24	Records conversation with M.F.A.: mission under Izzet Pasha to Nationalists to start in two or three days: ratification of treaty urged, but considers Govt. will attempt to delay both ratification and return of mission.	190
183 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1246	Nov. 24	Transmits translation of High Commissioners' reply to Govt.'s note of Nov. 4 (see No. 173): reply explains reasons for urgency of ratification, and asks for definite assurance that it will be given within period stated in No. 173.	190
184 TO SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1123	Nov. 25	Explains political objections to further Greek advance in Ismid area at present time.	191
185 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1256	Nov. 26	Transmits tel. from Smyrna describing situation there and urging need for speedy definition of Allied Govts.' attitude towards King Constantine.	192
186 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1253	Nov. 27	Reports general impression in Allied circles that Greek situation makes revision of peace treaty inevitable, especially since defeat of Armenia: analyses situation and suggests objects to be aimed at in revision.	193
187 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1263	Dec. 1	Requests H.M.G. to intervene with London Committee of Ottoman Bank to secure expected monetary advance: similar request being sent to French Govt.: explains importance of avoiding financial crisis until treaty ratified: stricter controls being imposed on Turkish finance by delegates on Public Debt Administration.	194
188 LORD HARDINGE Paris Tel. No. 1368	Dec. 2	Transmits summary of note from French Govt. on their attitude towards military command at Constantinople: until ratification of treaty Gen. Charpy must be consulted on all questions involving French troops.	195
189 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople No. 1606	Dec. 6	Reports departure on Dec. 3, and composition, of mission to Nationalists: has asked Izzet Pasha to secure release of British prisoners if possible: discusses prospects of mission.	196
190 TO LORD HARDINGE Paris Tel. No. 1278 TO SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 534	Dec. 8	Informs of possibility of Turkish ratification of treaty by Dec. 15: instructions to urge arrival of French/Italian delegate to Financial Commission in view of disastrous state of Turkish finances.	198
191 TO SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1156	Dec. 9	Refers to No. 184 and states willingness to withdraw objections if military grounds require, but hopes no advance will be considered necessary.	199
192 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1293	Dec. 10	Reports High Commissioners' decision to send note to Porte warning of withdrawal of Allied financial assistance unless certain	199

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		conditions fulfilled: urges constitution of Financial Commission immediately on ratification, and that it be empowered to make advances necessary to avert financial and administrative collapse.	
193 To SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome	Dec. 10	Letter from Sir J. Tilley informing of alleged conversation between Mustapha Kemal's agent at Rome and a representative of Italian Foreign Ministry on the subject of Italy's favourable attitude towards a strong Turkey and her readiness to mediate between Turkish Govt. and Nationalists, and between Turkish and Allied Govts.	200
194 LORD HARDINGE Paris No. 3688	Dec. 12	Reports imminent departure to Constantinople of French Financial Commissioner: suggests French Govt. be told that he will not be recognized as President of Commission until Gen. Harington recognized as President of Military Commission. Gives M. Leygues's views on Turkish treaty. French official circles opposed to ratification in present form and favour agreement with Nationalists, with restoration of Smyrna to Turkish sovereignty.	201
195 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1299	Dec. 13	Refers to No. 192: gives text of identic telegrams from High Commissioners to Govts. requesting authority for use of £T.252,000 under sequestration in Ottoman Bank as subsidiary guarantee for advances to be made by banks. French Govt. have agreed.	202
196 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1307	Dec. 16	Considers prospects of ratification discouraging: gives reasons for continued delay.	203
197 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople No. 1661	Dec. 18	Reports sudden development of grave economic crisis: describes situation: considers no permanent solution possible until reconciliation between Govt. and Nationalists.	204
198 SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1321	Dec. 21	Reports conversation, Dec. 20, with M.F.A. on question of ratification: Govt.'s request for further delay: suggests repetition of instructions to High Commissioners in order to avoid misunderstanding due to statement by M. Leygues and reports of probable modification of treaty.	206
199 To SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1187	Dec. 24	Agrees to financial arrangement in No. 195 provided funds obtained thereby are controlled by Ottoman Public Debt Council until Financial Commission appointed.	207
200 LORD HARDINGE Paris No. 3808	Dec. 24	Summarizes press reactions to Mr. Lloyd George's speech in House of Commons on Dec. 22 and to H.M.G.'s policy in Near East: reasons for French Govt.'s desire for revision of Turkish peace treaty.	208

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
201	To SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1190	Dec. 26	Refers to No. 198: instructions to make no further representations concerning ratification until Greek situation clearer.	209
202	SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1339	Dec. 29	Turkish mission to Nationalists has been instructed to return.	209
203	To SIR G. BUCHANAN Rome Tel. No. 547	Dec. 29	Informs of suggested independent approach to Mustapha Kemal by Italian Govt.: instructions to support French colleague in protest.	210
204	To SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople Tel. No. 1197	Dec. 29	Summarizes reasons for and against immediate setting-up of Financial Commission: asks for High Commissioners' views.	210
205	To LORD HARDINGE Paris No. 4193	Dec. 31	Outlines points concerning execution of Turkish peace treaty which have been formally endorsed by H.M.G.: requests formal assurance of French Govt.'s concurrence.	211
206	SIR H. RUMBOLD Constantinople No. 1708	Dec. 31	Situation report: rumours of failure of mission to Nationalists: worsening financial situation: reply received to note referred to in No. 192: Turkish proposals being examined by provisional Financial Commission: Govt. pursuing policy of passive resistance to Allied demands: outlook obscure and unsatisfactory.	213

CHAPTER II

Arabia, Syria, and Palestine

February 12, 1920—January 7, 1921

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
207	COL. SIR A. WILSON Baghdad Tel. No. 1866	Feb. 12	Transmits copy of instructions to Political Agent, Bahrein, with regard to his meeting with Emir Ibn Saud.	215
208	COL. SIR A. WILSON Baghdad Tel. No. 1867	Feb. 12	Refers to No. 207 and reports result of meeting on Feb. 5 between Emir Ibn Saud and Political Agent: Emir's views on threatened <i>jihad</i> movement and on steps to be taken by H.M.G.	216
209	COL. MEINERTZHAGEN Cairo Tel. No. EA 2994	Feb. 19	Reports arrival of British Liaison Officer with message for F.O. and letter to Lord Allenby from Emir Feisal. Reassuring statement regarding British and French Arab policy should be sent to latter.	218
210	COL. MEINERTZHAGEN Cairo Tel. No. 2	Feb. 20	Transmits message from Mr. Samuel supporting Col. Meinertzhagen's proposals for northern and eastern boundaries of Palestine (see Vol. IV, No. 366).	219
211	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 156	Feb. 22	Points raised in No. 209 are being discussed with French representatives: Emir Feisal may be privately informed of Lord Curzon's sympathy.	219

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
212	COL. MEINERTZHAGEN Cairo Tel. No. 15	Mar. 2	Reports demonstrations in Palestine by Moslem Christian League: recommends strong protest to French Govt. against anti-Zionist propaganda in Palestine.	219
213	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 197	Mar. 2	Refers to No. 208: gives views on Emir Ibn Saud's statements and King Hussein's position regarding alleged <i>jihād</i> movement: believes latter still hopes to maintain friendship with Britain.	220
214	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. EA 3004	Mar. 7	Reports Emir Feisal forced by nationalist feeling to convoke Syrian Congress which intends to declare independence and crown him king. Emir Feisal asks what line H.M.G. recommend him to take.	221
215	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 200	Mar. 8	Refers to No. 214 and transmits message from British and French Govts. to Emir Feisal inviting him to attend Peace Conference discussion of Syrian question and warning him that irresponsible action by Congress may have serious results.	222
216	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 224	Mar. 8	Transmits message from Chief Administrator, O.E.T.A. South, suggesting Emir Feisal be permitted to announce at Congress that Powers accept him as representative of Arab State, including British and French provinces.	223
217	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 225	Mar. 8	Transmits copy of his reply to message in No. 216. Proposed action would embroil Britain with France.	223
218	FRENCH AMBASSADOR London	Mar. 11	Letter to Lord Curzon referring to telegrams received from M. Millerand concerning Treaty of Sèvres and Syrian question. As instructed, he will raise at Supreme Council M. Millerand's wish for new joint tel. to be sent to Emir Feisal stating that French and British Govts. consider Syrian Congress proclamation invalid.	224
219	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. ? 260	Mar. 13	Reports receipt of message from Emir Feisal informing High Commissioners that Syrian Congress has declared Syria independent and placed him on throne, and assuring H.M.G. of continued friendship. News confirmed by British Liaison Officer, Damascus. Situation there quiet.	224
220	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 223	Mar. 13	Refers to No. 215: instructions to inform Emir Feisal French and British Govts. regard proceedings of Syrian Congress as invalid and to renew invitation to him to state case before Peace Conference.	225
221	To EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 901	Mar. 13	Records interview with French Ambassador regarding Syrian question: the two Govts. agreed on tenor of immediate tel. (see No. 220), but Lord Curzon expressed view that present situation is result of French action.	226

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
222	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. EA 3023	Mar. 14	Reports receipt of (1) communications from Syrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs announcing Syrian independence, expounding policy of new Govt., and expressing Emir Feisal's desire for friendship with France and Britain, (2) of Syrian Congress statement demanding Mesopotamian independence.	229
223	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 271	Mar. 18	Urges acknowledgement by Powers of Emir Feisal's sovereignty over Arab nation or confederation of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, retaining French and British administration: believes alternative to be war.	231
224	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 251	Mar. 19	Refers to Nos. 223, 215 and 219: states H.M.G. do not contemplate war with Syria: requests elucidation of proposal made in No. 223, and emphasizes dangers of attempt to prejudge decision of Peace Conference.	231
225	COL. MEINERTZHAGEN Cairo Tel. No. 33	Mar. 19	Reports Emir Feisal has received message in No. 220 and reasserts friendship with Britain and willingness to return to Peace Conference when Syrian people assured satisfactory solution imminent.	233
226	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 273	Mar. 20	Replies to No. 224: emphasizes rejection of Syrian Congress action may force Emir Feisal to commence hostilities: does not believe proposals in No. 223 interfere with Peace Conference machinery.	233
227	COL. SIR A. WILSON Baghdad Tel. No. 3600	Mar. 21	Refers to No. 223: submits that it should be made clear Anglo-French Declaration of Nov. 7, 1918, binds H.M.G. to set up indigenous Mesopotamian Govt. independent of Syria: no community of feeling exists between Syria and Mesopotamia.	234
228	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 264	Mar. 22	Refers to No. 226: gives H.M.G.'s views on Syrian question: satisfactory settlement possible if Emir Feisal comes to Peace Conference prepared to recognize British and French special interests in Palestine, and Syria and Lebanon, respectively.	235
229	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 282	Mar. 23	Refers to Nos. 228 and 226: states views on conditions of proposed invitation to Emir Feisal to Peace Conference.	235
230	COL. MEINERTZHAGEN Cairo Tel. No. Pol. 1607	Mar. 26	Reports receipt of proclamation by 'Congrès Général of Irakiens' of Mar. 8 declaring (1) independence of 'Irak and Mesopotamia', (2) end of British occupation, (3) union with Syria and (4) choice of Emir Abdullah as King and Emir Zeid as Regent of Iraq; also letter from Emir Feisal to Lord Allenby expressing desire for settlement: refers to No. 229.	236

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
231	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 298	Mar. 27	Refers to No. 229; reports tel. from King Hussein supporting resolution of Syrian and Mesopotamian Congress and emphasizing principle of Arab unity.	237
232	EARL CURZON Foreign Office	Mar. 30	Record of conversation with French Ambassador regarding Syrian question: suggestions as to possible joint policy of British and French Govts.: refers to No. 229.	237
233	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 292	Apr. 1	Refers to No. 231: instructions to inform King Hussein and Emir Abdullah that future of Mesopotamia can only be decided by Peace Conference.	239
234	FRENCH AMBASSADOR London	Apr. 1	Memo. replying to suggestions recorded in No. 232.	239
235	MR. SAMUEL (At sea)	Apr. 2	Private letter to Lord Curzon reporting on the Palestine movement for union with Syria and danger of recognizing Emir Feisal as King of Palestine. <i>Encl.</i> Proposals for loose federation of Arab States.	241 244
236	COL. MEINERTZHAGEN Cairo Tel. No. 51	Apr. 4	Transmits message from Emir Feisal to Lord Curzon accepting invitation to Peace Conference on condition H.M.G. recognize Syrian independence.	246
237	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 335	Apr. 7	Reports reply by King Hussein to No. 233 stating he has no connection with Peace Conference: reports proposed reply, and urges that Emir Abdullah should visit Cairo.	246
238	FRENCH AMBASSADOR London	Apr. 7	Further memo. on Syrian question (see No. 234), transmitting text of proposed assurance to Emir Feisal regarding French policy towards Syria.	247
239	COL. MEINERTZHAGEN Cairo Tel. No. 56	Apr. 9	Describes status and composition of Syrian Congress: Palestine delegates invited, not elected.	248
240	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 320	Apr. 9	Requests views on advisability of proposed visit of King Hussein to London.	249
241	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 324	Apr. 10	Refers to No. 237: reply proposed goes too far: suggests more suitable answer to King Hussein's message.	249
242	LORD HARDINGE Foreign Office Tel. No. 28	Apr. 21	Transmits to Lord Curzon (San Remo) text of proposed tel. to Lord Allenby instructing him to send non-committal reply to Emir Feisal's letter regarding Palestine riots.	250
243	EARL CURZON San Remo Tel. No. 38	Apr. 26	Records decisions of Peace Conference regarding Syria and Palestine. Refers to No. 236 and emphasizes desirability of Emir Feisal's attendance at Conference to discuss his own position and outstanding questions. Question of Mesopotamia does not arise in this context.	251

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
244 F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. Unnumbered	Apr. 27	Transmits text of proposed note to Emir Feisal informing him of Conference decisions and inviting him to attend Conference (see Nos. 243 and 236).	252
245 To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 410	May 4	Transmits message to King Hussein from H.M.G. urging a meeting at Aden between King Hussein and Emir Ibn Saud to remove danger of open rupture: H.M.G. offer aid and arbitration, and request assurance truce will be maintained during pilgrimage season and guarantee that pilgrimage will be reopened for people of Nejd on Emir Ibn Saud's guaranteeing their good behaviour. Refusal to co-operate will entail loss of further British support. Identic message sent to Emir Ibn Saud.	253
246 F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. Unnumbered	May 6	Private tel. to Lord Curzon. Foresees no difficulty in replacement of Military by Civil Administration in Palestine when mandate becomes effective, but believes appointment of Mr. Samuel, a Jew, as first Governor will have highly dangerous effect on native population, both Muslim and Christian.	255
247 To SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 433	May 7	Gives information on petroleum situation in Persia, Mesopotamia and Palestine (see No. 57) in response to U.S. criticisms of British policies.	256
248 F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 470	May 13	Refers to No. 244: transmits reply of Emir Feisal who accepts invitation to Peace Conference on condition Palestine recognized as inseparable from Syria.	257
249 F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo No. 503	May 16	Reports visit of Emir Abdullah to Cairo, and discussion of questions concerning the Hedjaz and other Arab countries.	259
250 MAJOR YOUNG Foreign Office	May 17	Memo. on the future control of Middle Eastern affairs: recommends formation of a special department of F.O.	260
251 EARL CURZON Foreign Office	May 18	Note to French Ambassador transmitting copies of Nos. 244 and 248, discussing relations with Emir Feisal, suggesting joint Anglo-French communication to him giving final invitation to come to Europe (refusal of which will entail loss of British and French support), and expressing general agreement with proposed reply to Hedjaz Delegation.	270
252 SIR A. GEDDES Washington No. 687	May 21	Refers to No. 247 and transmits copies of U.S. President's message to Senate dealing with alleged British restrictions on U.S. oil interests: suggests reply in Parliament. Emphasizes close relations of Standard Oil Company with U.S. Administration.	273
253 F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo No. 559	May 28	Discusses question of subsidies to Arab rulers, and urges their continuance.	274

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
254	FRENCH AMBASSADOR London	May 31	Note to Lord Curzon transmitting M. Millerand's reply to No. 251 which refers to No. 248 and encloses draft joint declaration to Emir Feisal. (See No. 266 below, n. 5.)	278
255	EMIR FEISAL (? Damascus) Tel. Unnumbered	Undated	Message to Mr. Lloyd George alleging French military attack: fears outbreak of war, and cannot leave Syria while expeditions continue. Requests Mr. Lloyd George to mediate.	282
256	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 541	June 4	Transmits message from Emir Feisal to Mr. Lloyd George, referring to No. 255 and begging him to intercede with French Govt. to stop alleged arming of Syrian Christians and to hand over administration of Syrian coast to Govt. at Damascus.	283
257	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 558	June 9	Reports letter from Emir Feisal asking truth of press report of appointment of Mr. Samuel as Palestine High Commissioner, and urging reversal of decision.	284
258	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 559	June 9	Reports receipt from Damascus for transmission to H.M.G. of tel. from M. Millerand to Emir Feisal, and latter's reply reaffirming Syrian independence and indivisibility and opposition to proposed Jewish national home.	285
259	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 522	June 9	Requests explanation for Cabinet why Jan. and Feb. instalments of Emir Feisal's subsidy were paid contrary to Govt. orders. Gives reasons for withholding money. No further payments to be made.	286
260	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 528	June 11	Refers to No. 259: instructions to protest to Emir Feisal and possibly King Hussein against further Arab attacks on British troops in Mesopotamia.	286
261	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 534	June 14	Refers to No. 257 and transmits reply to Emir Feisal regarding Mr. Samuel's appointment.	287
262	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 539	June 15	Instructions to transmit Mr. Lloyd George's message (No. 263 below) to King Hussein.	287
263	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 540	June 15	Message from Mr. Lloyd George to King Hussein regarding Peace Conference decisions on Arab independence and stating invitation to Emir Feisal came from Peace Conference, not H.M.G. Reaffirms H.M.G.'s friendship and fidelity to obligations.	288
264	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 582	June 16	Refers to No. 260: representations made to Emir Feisal but not to King Hussein.	288
265	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 599	June 19	Transmits message from Emir Feisal drawing H.M.G.'s attention to serious situation following truce between French Govt. and Nationalist Turks.	289

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
266	LORD HARDINGE Foreign Office Tel. No. 1	June 21	Tel. to Lord Curzon (Boulogne) referring to No. 265: in view of danger of agreement between Emir Feisal and Nationalist Turks, suggests French Govt. might give assurances to Feisal. <i>Note 5.</i> Minute by Lord Curzon of discussion of Syrian question with M. Berthelot: H.M.G.'s objections to draft joint note (No. 254, encl. 2).	290
267	MR. VANSITTART Paris	June 21	Letter to Major Young reporting progress of negotiations regarding Arabia, mandates, and boundaries of Syria and Palestine.	291
268	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 616	June 23	Refers to No. 257 and reports receipt of two letters from Emir Feisal regarding his relations with French Govt. and asking for H.M.G.'s advice.	294
269	SIR H. SAMUEL Rome Unnumbered	June 26	Submits proposals for basis of agreement to be negotiated between Emir Feisal and Palestine Administration.	295
270	SIR H. SAMUEL Rome Unnumbered	June 26	Reports conversations with MM. Millerand and Berthelot at Boulogne regarding Syrian situation.	297
271	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. unnumbered	June 29	Transmits message from Mr. Vansittart reporting conversation on Syrian question with M. Berthelot, who stated any further communication to Emir Feisal should come from French Govt. alone.	297
272	MR. VANSITTART Paris	June 29	Letter to Major Young referring to No. 267 and reporting progress of negotiations regarding mandates, Arabia, Palestine water, frontiers of Palestine, and Yarmuk valley. Encloses (1) draft text of Arabian treaty, (2) draft proposals regarding Litani waters.	298
273	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 601	July 2	Transmits (for communication to King Hussein) text of message sent to Emir Ibn Saud regarding arrangements for proposed meeting of the two rulers at Mecca: H.M.G. hope for satisfactory result.	305
274	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Alexandria Tel. No. 650	July 3	Message from King Hussein in reply to No. 263: repeats he has no relations with Peace Conference and states his position regarding H.M.G.	306
275	COUNT DE SALIS Rome No. 82	July 3	Reports Sir H. Samuel's and his own conversations at the Vatican regarding possible French claims to traditional religious honours in Palestine in spite of their renunciation of protectorate over Roman Catholics: H.M.G.'s views requested.	307
276	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Alexandria Tel. No. 658	July 5	Transmits message from King Hussein who states he is placed in critical position by British refusal of subsidy and help and asks for advice.	309

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
277	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 673	July 6	Refers to No. 268 and reports (1) letter received from Emir Feisal stating H.M.G. have sanctioned further payments of subsidy: (2) letter from Emir received by his unofficial liaison officer in Egypt states Emir has taken action against those responsible for recent incidents, and threatens to break off relations with French Govt.	309
278	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 627	July 9	Refers to No. 277. H.M.G. have not sanctioned subsidy.	310
279	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 634	July 10	Question of King Hussein's subsidy being considered by Cabinet: suggests he should be persuaded to accept that Nejd pilgrimage will take place as arranged by Emir Ibn Saud.	310
280	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 703	July 13	Message received from Emir Feisal reporting French ultimatum and asking for prompt representations.	311
281	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 643	July 13	Refers to Nos. 273 and 245. Discusses King Hussein's new obstructions to pilgrimage. Reiterates that continuance of H.M.G.'s support depends on re-opening of pilgrimage: instructions to remind King Hussein of promise, and urge him to show his determination for peace.	311
282	To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 38	July 14	Refers to No. 269: instructions not to negotiate directly with Emir Feisal concerning Emir's sovereignty. States objections to some other proposals in No. 269.	312
283	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 711	July 15	Reports further letter from Emir Feisal asking for intervention of H.M.G. between French Govt. and himself and re-affirming wish for peaceful solution.	312
284	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 653	July 16	Refers to Nos. 280 and 283. H.M.G. unable to intervene in Syrian question since grant of mandate to France.	313
285	To F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 654	July 17	Authorization to make payments up to £30,000 to King Hussein to ensure good behaviour of Bedouin tribes during pilgrimage. H.M.G.'s offer of arbitration between Emir Ibn Saud and King Hussein still open.	313
286	To SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 619	July 23	Transmits message from Mr. Kerr on behalf of Mr. Lloyd George explaining circumstances behind Anglo-French oil agreement: emphasizes that agreement does not exclude other nations from development of Mesopotamian oilfields.	314
287	To EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 2538	July 24	Records interview of July 19 between French Ambassador and Lord Hardinge regarding French ultimatum to Syria.	315

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
288 EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 2394	July 27	Reports entry of French troops into Damascus: recapitulates events in Syria leading up to French ultimatum and outbreak of fighting: discusses state of opinion in France.	317
289 To SIR G. GRAHAME Paris No. 2615	July 28	Records conversation with M. Berthelot at Boulogne regarding French intentions towards Syria: believes French Govt. contemplate deposition of Emir Feisal: notes that this now announced.	320
290 SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 565	July 29	Reports that, in spite of intended issue of explanation contained in No. 286, publication of Anglo-French oil agreement likely to produce violent criticism in U.S.: suggests French Govt. should be urged to support agreement warmly before American public.	322
291 To EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 2595	July 29	Records interview between Lord Hardinge and M. Cambon regarding future of Emir Feisal, and H.M.G.'s objections to possible elevation of Emir Mahommed Said to Syrian throne (see No. 289).	322
292 COL. SIR A. WILSON Baghdad Tel. No. 9249	July 31	Tel. to Secretary of State for India discussing Emir Feisal's position since his departure from Syria and arrival in British sphere. Suggests offer to him of Emirate of Mesopotamia.	323
293 To EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 2631	July 31	Refers to Nos. 286 and 290: transmits copy of No. 287 and instructs Earl of Derby to represent to French Govt. importance of supporting Anglo-French oil agreement against hostile American criticism.	324
294 F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 792	Aug. 2	Reports Emir Feisal, having reached Haifa, wishes to visit him: thinks it preferable that Emir should be received by High Commissioner, Jerusalem, and then proceed to Medina: requests instructions.	325
295 MR. VANSITTART Paris No. 71 A	Aug. 2	Transmits, with comments, revised draft of Palestine mandate. <i>Note 2.</i> Text of draft mandate where it differed from final draft submitted to League of Nations.	326
296 SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 175	Aug. 3	Reports Emir Feisal's desire to go to Switzerland or Italy, and to cause no difficulties between H.M.G. and French Govt.	330
297 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 69	Aug. 5	Refers to No. 296: H.M.G. have no objection: instructions to transmit friendly message from H.M.G. to Emir Feisal.	330
298 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 70	Aug. 6	Instructions to make known British policy regarding future administration of area east of Palestine and south of French zone: area should be independent but in close relation with Palestine. Palestine boundary to be agreed with French Govt. to Sykes-Picot line, and with local authorities farther south: enquires whether Emir Zeid acceptable as ruler of area.	331

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
299	TO COUNT DE SALIS Rome No. 154	Aug. 6	Refers to No. 275. Instructions to inform Cardinal Secretary of State that H.M.G. consider French renunciation of protectorate over Roman Catholics in territories ceded by Turkey is absolute, and includes all special privileges. H.M.G. would also view unfavourably proposal for Catholic interests in Holy Places to be represented by French agent.	331
300	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 885	Aug. 7	Instructions to protest against reported French occupation of areas within British sphere under Sykes-Picot Agreement.	333
301	SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 179	Aug. 7	Refers to No. 298: advocates British occupation of territory up to Hedjaz railway: Trans-Jordan sheikhs in favour: Emir Zeid unsuitable as ruler.	333
302	SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 180	Aug. 7	Personal tel. to Lord Curzon and Mr. Lloyd George strongly urging inclusion of Trans-Jordania in Palestine.	334
303	MR. SCOTT Alexandria Tel. No. 816	Aug. 9	Reports King Hussein now refuses to give guarantees regarding meeting with Emir Ibn Saud or maintenance of peace in return for £30,000 promised: threatens to abdicate if full subsidy not paid as before without conditions. Recommends payment of full amount under certain conditions, provided Nejd pilgrimage has definitely been cancelled.	335
304	SIR E. CROWE Foreign Office	Aug. 10	Record of conversation with M. de Fleuriau regarding Emir Said and future of Emir Feisal: French Govt.'s strong objections to installation of Emir Feisal in Mesopotamia (see Nos. 289 and 291).	336
305	TO SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 80	Aug. 11	Refers to Nos. 301 and 302: French Govt. repudiate charge of extending influence into British sphere. H.M.G. therefore opposed to military occupation of Trans-Jordania, but British political officers should be sent to specific areas as advisers and to encourage local self-government and trade with Palestine.	337
306	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 963	Aug. 12	Refers to No. 300: protest against French action not made, in view of H.M.G.'s reported intention to make Emir Feisal ruler of Mesopotamia.	338
307	SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 187 (Part 1)	Aug. 12	Reports deputation from sheikhs of French zone requesting British protection: reply given that in view of provisions of Sykes-Picot Agreement H.M.G. unable to intervene.	339
308	SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 187 (Part 2)	Aug. 12	Reports advice given to Trans-Jordanian sheikhs who asked whether to obey Damascus Govt. orders and urgently requested British occupation. If deprived of all higher authority region will fall into anarchy.	339

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
309 EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 971	Aug. 13	Refers to Nos. 306 and 300: has been assured report of French intervention in British sphere incorrect. French Govt.'s official protest against proposal to make Emir Feisal king of Mesopotamia will be communicated by French Chargé d'Affaires.	340
310 To MR. SCOTT Cairo Tel. No. 735	Aug. 15	Instructions to attempt to persuade King Hussein to instruct Hedjaz delegation to sign peace treaty.	340
311 COUNT DE SALIS Rome Tel. No. 40	Aug. 15	Has communicated No. 299 to Cardinal Secretary of State who expressed satisfaction at receipt of H.M.G.'s views.	341
312 MR. SCOTT Alexandria Tel. No. 834	Aug. 16	Refers to Nos. 310 and 303: urges payment of subsidy to King Hussein: without this, approach regarding peace treaty useless. <i>Note 3.</i> F.O. tel. No. 746 of Aug. 20 gave Treasury conditions on which subsidy might be paid.	341
313 ITALIAN AMBASSADOR London	Aug. 16	Note protesting against Anglo-French oil agreement and requesting negotiations to guarantee Italian interests (see No. 286).	342
314 SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 207	Aug. 22	Refers to Nos. 300 and 305. Describes visit to Salt where overwhelming desire for British administration expressed. Political officers and police left at Salt. Reports Gen. Gouraud's instructions to officials not to interfere with British action south of Sykes-Picot line. Requests approval of action reported in Nos. 307 and 308.	342
315 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 110	Aug. 26	Refers to No. 314. H.M.G. insist on strict adherence to very limited assistance in Trans-Jordania laid down in No. 305. Action reported in Nos. 307 and 308 approved.	344
316 LORD HARDINGE Foreign Office	Aug. 30	Record of a conversation with M. de Fleuriau regarding Emir Feisal's journey to Europe and alleged candidature for throne of Mesopotamia.	344
317 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 121	Aug. 31	Reminder that terms of any agreement for transfer of Deraa-Semakh must not imply that frontier negotiations with French Govt. are terminated.	345
318 To ITALIAN AMBASSADOR London	Sept. 17	Note replying to No. 313: explains reasons for Anglo-French oil agreement, which aims at no exclusive rights in any country.	346
319 MR. SCOTT Cairo Tel. No. 933	Sept. 23	Reports King Hussein states he will instruct Hedjaz delegate to sign peace treaty if H.M.G. fulfil agreements: complains of British refusal to supply aeroplanes and answer protests, and states after Prime Minister's refusal to meet Emir Feisal he can only resign.	347
320 LORD HARDINGE Foreign Office	Sept. 23	Record of conversation with M. Cambon at which Lord Hardinge urged desirability that Emir Feisal should come to Britain rather than reside in Italy or Switzerland.	348

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
321	To MR. SCOTT Cairo Tel. No. 835	Sept. 28	Refers to No. 319: instructions regarding payment of £30,000 subsidy to King Hussein: Major Batten should negotiate with King Hussein regarding signature of peace treaty if he thinks desired result likely to be obtained.	348
322	To MR. VANSITTART Paris No. 157	Sept. 30	Refers to No. 272: instructions as to further negotiations regarding frontiers between British and French mandatory areas. <i>Encl.</i> Proposed amendment to draft Anglo-French Agreement regarding Yarmuk valley.	349 352
323	MR. SCOTT Ramleh No. 1110	Sept. 30	Discusses change in King Hussein's attitude to H.M.G. since San Remo Conference and French action in Syria, and describes his hostile acts: considers questions of subsidy and of King's successor in event of abdication.	352
324	SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 279	Oct. 2	Lists points in frontier settlement essential to Palestine interests.	355
325	FRENCH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES London	Oct. 9	Note stating objections of French Govt. to proposed reception of Emir Feisal in Britain (see No. 320).	355
326	SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem No. 92	Oct. 12	Reports discussion with Gen. Gouraud's Secretary-General, M. de Caix, of (1) British officers' action in Trans-Jordania, (2) possible despatch of British troops to Trans-Jordania (favoured by French authorities), (3) control of Hedjaz railway, (4) position of French interests under British administration of Palestine.	356
327	SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 700	Oct. 14	Reports views of American Zionists regarding draft mandate for Palestine: believes it politic to meet Zionist ambitions as far as possible.	358
328	To MR. VANSITTART Paris No. 163	Oct. 16	Refers to Nos. 322 and 272: approves action in frontier negotiations: instructions for further negotiations on questions of water supply for Palestine and of Yarmuk valley railway. <i>Encl.</i> Amended text of Article 6 of 'Projet de Convention'.	359 362
329	ITALIAN AMBASSADOR London No. 2202	Oct. 23	Note replying to No. 318 and stating view that Anglo-French oil agreement conflicts with Economic Manifesto and spirit of League of Nations, and represents severe hindrance to Italian economic and industrial development: urges H.M.G. to reconsider question.	363
330	MAJOR YOUNG Foreign Office	Undated	Memo. on H.M.G.'s Arabian policy: urges conclusion of treaty with Hedjaz and financial assistance to other Arabian rulers.	365
331	DR. WEIZMANN London	Oct. 30	Letter to Lord Curzon regarding (1) boundaries of Palestine, with special reference to question of water supplies, and (2) text of mandate.	373

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
332 MAJOR YOUNG Foreign Office	Nov. 6	Memo. on Anglo-French relations in the Middle East: proposals for future negotiations.	376
333 To DR. WEIZMANN London	Nov. 8	Refers to No. 331: records H.M.G.'s efforts to obtain favourable boundary for Palestine and states conclusion of agreement with French Govt. has been deferred in view of French refusal to modify eastern frontier and to consider vital water needs of Palestine.	381
334 To MR. VANSITTART Paris No. 168	Nov. 9	Refers to Nos. 331 and 333: instructions to inform French Govt. H.M.G. are unwilling to conclude any Palestine frontier agreement not containing provision for use of Jordan and Litani waters by Palestine.	382
335 To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 1218	Nov. 11	Tel. for Mr. Vansittart regarding question of submission of mandates to League of Nations Council by H.M.G. and French Govt.: refers to No. 334.	383
336 To MR. CHURCHILL Milan Tel. No. 35	Nov. 11	Instructions to inform Emir Feisal H.M. the King will be glad to receive him after Nov. 30.	384
337 MR. VANSITTART Paris No. 108	Nov. 13	Refers to Nos. 334 and 331, and urges desirability of reaching some agreement with French Govt. regarding boundary convention, as to leave question unsolved would prejudice Zionist interests and Anglo-French relations: suggests possible basis for negotiation. Reports interview with M. Kammerer who stated French Govt. refuse to make further concessions but are still ready to sign convention.	384
338 F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 1094	Nov. 16	Suggests King Hussein should be invited to London and invested with G.C.B.	388
339 To EARL OF DERBY No. 3724	Nov. 16	Records interview with M. Cambon, the retiring French Ambassador. Discussion of French anti-British press campaign. Lord Curzon explained reasons for Emir Feisal's forthcoming visit to Britain and gave assurance Syrian question would not be discussed.	388
340 MR. VANSITTART Paris No. 109	Nov. 16	Refers to No. 337. Explains French Govt.'s attitude regarding Anglo-French Convention and emphasizes matter will be made worse by delay. Describes French anti-Zionism and fundamental distrust of British Middle East policy.	390
341 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 258	Nov. 19	States H.M.G. do not intend to sign Anglo-French Convention in present form, and requests Sir H. Samuel's views.	391
342 MAJOR YOUNG Foreign Office	Nov. 29	Memo. on possible negotiations with the Hedjaz with the aim of (1) persuading the Hedjaz to accept Treaties of Versailles and Sèvres, and (2) concluding a treaty with H.M.G.	392

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		<i>Appendix. Letter from King Hussein to H.M. High Commissioner, Cairo, Aug. 28, 1918.</i>	405
343 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem No. 410	Nov. 30	Refers to No. 326. Views on M. de Caix's representations: instructions (1) to point out to French officials that H.M.G. do not intend to send troops to Trans-Jordania unless trouble arises, nor to take direct responsibility for administration, (2) to explain situation to British political officers in Trans-Jordania, (3) to consider advisability of centralizing administration there.	407
344 SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 406	Dec. 3	Transmits text of proposed communication to Trans-Jordania denying reports of Arab Army advance against French, and stating H.M.G. would not countenance such movement.	408
345 SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem No. 181	Dec. 6	Recounts steps taken regarding relations between Palestine Administration and French authorities in Syria. Urges replacement of British Liaison Officer in Damascus by consular official, which would help to improve relations with French authorities.	409
346 To LORD HARDINGE Paris No. 3949	Dec. 8	Instructions to inform French M.F.A. (1) that Emir Feisal has been told H.M.G. would condemn hostile action by Emir Abdullah against French, and (2) that H.M. representatives at Jeddah and Jerusalem are making H.M.G.'s views widely known.	412
347 SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 425	Dec. 12	Refers to No. 343 and reports actions of Emir Abdullah: emphasizes serious consequences for Trans-Jordania and Palestine in possible event of Emir Abdullah's proclamation of Sherifian Govt. in Trans-Jordania.	413
348 LORD HARDINGE Paris No. 3686	Dec. 12	Reports interviews with (1) President of Council, to whom he read No. 346, and (2) Gen. Gouraud, regarding Syrian situation and Emir Feisal's character and activities.	414
349 To MAJOR BATTEN Jeddah Tel. No. 25	Dec. 13	Transmits message from Emir Feisal to King Hussein (1) reporting his reception by H.M. the King, and (2) requesting (a) suppression of hostile action on northern frontier, and (b) opening of negotiations with H.M.G.	415
350 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 302	Dec. 15	Refers to No. 347: instructions to make known in Trans-Jordania that King Hussein is impressing on Emir Abdullah undesirability of anti-Allied action.	416
351 MR. MONTAGU India Office Tel. No. 4132	Dec. 16	Tel. to Sir P. Cox (Baghdad) recording decisions of inter-departmental meeting on question of subsidies for Arab rulers. Proposed meeting of Arab chiefs postponed.	416

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
352 To LORD HARDINGE Paris Tel. No. 1308	Dec. 19	Instructions to inform French Govt. of King Hussein's action to restrain Sherifian activities (see No. 350) and of H.M.G.'s confidence French authorities will avoid military action in British sphere if possible. Gives confidential information of proposed action by friendly tribes with possible air support against Turkish centre in French sphere on Mesopotamian border: H.M.G. consequently unable to protest against possible French action in Trans-Jordania.	417
353 To LORD HARDINGE Paris	Dec. 20	Private letter from Lord Curzon referring to No. 348. Does not believe Emir Feisal offered to help French against British: French Govt. should not receive impression H.M.G. regard him as intriguer against Anglo-French friendship.	418
354 To MR. DEEDES Jerusalem	Dec. 21	Private letter from Sir J. Tilley recording discussion between French and British Prime Ministers regarding Palestine frontiers: decision to insert clause in convention regarding sharing of Jordan and Yarmuk waters.	419
355 LORD HARDINGE Paris Tel. No. 1410	Dec. 23	Reports signature of Convention and arrangements for publication.	420
356 To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. No. 324	Dec. 23	Emir Feisal, instructed by King Hussein, has started discussions with H.M.G. on matters of mutual interest. Transmits proposed explanation of H.M.G.'s position regarding Trans-Jordania, and asks for views.	421
357 To FRENCH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES London	Dec. 23	Lord Curzon requests him to inform French Govt. talks with Emir Feisal will proceed on basis that mandatory principle and Syrian question are not open to discussion.	421
358 FOREIGN OFFICE	Dec. 23	Record of conversation between Emir Feisal and Sir J. Tilley regarding relations between Britain and the Hedjaz.	422
359 To LORD HARDINGE Paris Tel. No. 1319	Dec. 26	Refers to No. 355: instructions to suggest to French M.F.A. postponement of publication of Convention until after decision of League of Nations regarding 'A' mandates.	425
360 To ITALIAN AMBASSADOR London	Dec. 28	Note expressing H.M.G.'s hope Italian Govt. will withdraw their refusal to recognize League of Nations' right to confer mandates until Treaty of Sèvres has entered into force.	426
361 To FRENCH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES London	Dec. 31	Transmits copy of No. 360 and requests views of French Govt. as to how to meet possible Italian argument based on formal Italian reservation of approval of mandates at San Remo.	427

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
362	To SIR H. SAMUEL Jerusalem Tel. Unnumbered	1921 Jan. 7	Private telegram recording Cabinet decision to hand over administration of Mesopotamia and Palestine to Colonial Office.	428

CHAPTER III

Persia

January 6, 1920—March 31, 1921

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
363	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 8	Jan. 6	Reports Persian Prime Minister recommends British representatives on pending tariff revision commission be regarded as advisory committee to Persian Govt.	429
364	MR. BIRSE Foreign Office	Jan. 6	Memo. on Soviet Russian advances in Central Asia.	429
365	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 12	Jan. 10	Instructions to advise Persian Govt. to refuse recognition to Afghan Consul-General reported on his way to Meshed and insist on his withdrawal.	432
366	MR. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 26	Jan. 13	Reports U.S. Senate's resolution calling on State Dept. to communicate Anglo-U.S. correspondence regarding Anglo-Persian Agreement: asks whether H.M.G. propose to reply to last U.S. note and if they object to communication and publication of correspondence.	433
367	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 25	Jan. 17	Reports conversation with Persian Prime Minister who outlined schemes for defence against Soviet menace: urges importance of evolving defence plans without delay.	433
368	To MR. LINDSAY Washington Tel. No. 71	Jan. 20	Refers to No. 366: H.M.G. do not intend to reply to U.S. Note, and object strongly to publication of unofficial correspondence.	434
369	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 43	Jan. 26	Refers to No. 367: implementation of Supreme Council's decision to send help to Transcaucasia should avert immediate danger of Soviet advance on Persia.	435
370	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 37	Jan. 28	Refers to No. 365: Persian Govt. have given instructions that Afghan Consul-General should not be received: Prime Minister enquires as to extent of British help in event of Afghan attack.	435
371	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 43	Jan. 29	Refers to No. 369: measures proposed cannot be regarded as adequate safeguard for Persia.	436
372	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 49	Jan. 31	Refers to No. 363: H.M.G. cannot accept proposals which imply Persia's right to modify 1903 Anglo-Persian tariff convention unilaterally.	436

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
373 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 67	Feb. 7	Refers to No. 371: measures proposed by Allies for defence of Transcaucasia are maximum permitted by Allied joint resources.	437
374 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 78	Feb. 18	Transmits tel. from Norperforce, pointing out danger to Enzeli in event of Soviet capture of Caspian fleet: requests despatch of naval gun personnel to Baku to assist Volunteer fleet.	437
375 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 83	Feb. 21	Refers to No. 373: emphasizes serious danger of Soviet attack on Persia and urges reconsideration of policy.	438
376 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 89	Feb. 24	Refers to No. 365: reports Afghan Govt. propose to send envoy to negotiate treaty with Persian Govt.: Persian Prime Minister inclined to receive envoy, but requests formal British support if H.M.G. wish him to refuse negotiations.	440
377 To SIR J. JORDAN Peking Tel. No. 72	Feb. 27	Instructs H.M. Representatives to act provisionally on previous instructions regarding assistance to Afghan subjects, pending final settlement.	440
378 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 103	Feb. 28	Refers to No. 376: instructions to inform Persian Prime Minister H.M.G. think Afghan envoy should be allowed to proceed to Tehran, if possible without escort.	441
379 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 95	Feb. 28	Reports successful progress of Tariff Revision Commission's work: proposed increase in sugar duty is one remaining difficulty but Persian Govt. willing to accept British Representatives' proposals if H.M.G. concur.	441
380 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 97	Feb. 29	Refers to No. 379: gives reasons for advising acceptance of proposed increase in sugar duty: discusses probable attitude of foreign powers to new tariff: reports French Minister's protest to Persian Prime Minister concerning Tariff Commission's activities.	443
381 LORD CHELMSFORD India Tel. No. 251 S	Mar. 3	Tel. to Mr. Montagu repeating information from Kashgar regarding Soviet successes in Central Asia and Soviet demands in Chinese Turkestan. Transmits copy of tel. from Moscow to Tashkent regarding Soviet policy in Turkestan, Afghanistan and Persia.	444
382 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 111	Mar. 9	Reports signature of tariff agreement: requests authority to agree in exchange of notes to proposed period of five years before notice can be given to terminate agreement.	446
383 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 115	Mar. 11	Refers to No. 384 below: gives views on future railway construction in Persia, and requests views of British experts.	447

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
384	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 116	Mar. 11	Refers to No. 383; urges H.M.G. to promote suggestion that Anglo-Persian Oil Co. should take over Bushire-Borasjun railway to prevent dismantling by Govt. of India.	448
385	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 123	Mar. 12	Persian Prime Minister requests H.M.G. to ask M. Sazonov to instruct Col. Starosselski to resign if he cannot accept measures proposed by Persian and British Govts. regarding Cossack Division.	448
386	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 124	Mar. 12	Reports conference on military situation and possible measures for defence of Persia in event of Soviet aggression: Prime Minister requests specific replies to questions regarding attitude of H.M.G. in event of aggression.	449
387	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 126	Mar. 13	Report of Anglo-Persian Military Commission about to be presented: problem of Cossack Division and attitude of Col. Starosselski: refers to No. 386 and reports discussion of (1) Soviet menace to Enzeli, and (2) Cossack Division by conference: emphasizes that apart from reinforcements, best safeguard to Persia would be to regain control of Caspian.	450
388	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 132	Mar. 16	Military Commission point out withdrawal of British troops from Persia will seriously impede reorganization of Persian Army and react unfavourably on internal situation.	453
389	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 136	Mar. 16	Records views of Persian M.F.A. on tariff agreement and requests views on how to avoid difficulty with foreign govts.	454
390	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 137	Mar. 16	Refers to No. 383; branch line to Enzeli being discouraged: building of other lines depends on financial situation.	454
391	To PERSIAN M.F.A. London	Mar. 18	Requests early submission of Anglo-Persian Agreement to Majlis in order to permit communication to League of Nations.	455
392	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 150	Mar. 20	Refers to No. 384: Govt. of India have been instructed not to remove line pending further instructions.	455
393	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 144	Mar. 21	Refers to No. 394 below: reports Belgian Minister states confidentially that French Minister is putting strong pressure on himself, American and Russian representatives to join in protest against tariff agreement.	456
394	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 143	Mar. 21	Refers to Nos. 389, 363 and 372: reports postponement of introduction of new tariff measures until Apr. 1; believes course adopted gives other Powers least reason to demand separate agreements: to withdraw would encourage them to make difficulties: asks for authority to conclude transaction at once.	456

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
395 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 153	Mar. 22	Refers to Nos. 385-8: Eastern Committee have considered Persian situation: replies to Persian Govt.'s questions. Believes H.M.G. are fulfilling obligations to Persia: favours reduction of numbers of Cossack Division: to regain control of Caspian impossible in present circumstances: H.M.G. not prepared to delay withdrawal of troops from Fars.	457
396 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 154	Mar. 24	Refers to Nos. 394 and 393: H.M.G. will not press matter further.	459
397 EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 388	Mar. 30	Reports interview with Shah of Persia, who requested H.M.G. to inform him and Persian Govt. as to their wishes regarding his return route to Persia, and to persuade Persian Govt. to make financial arrangements for his journey.	459
398 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 161	Apr. 1	Reports Persian Cabinet changes and issue of manifesto by Prime Minister defending present policy.	460
399 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 162	Apr. 1	Refers to No. 398: describes events leading up to Cabinet changes: Prime Minister's action had his support.	461
400 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 166	Apr. 2	Refers to No. 396 and reports exchange of notes bringing revised tariff into operation: gives reasons why foreign powers should have no grounds for complaint.	462
401 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 179	Apr. 5	Reports Persian Prime Minister's desire to send mission to Soviet leaders to explain attitude of Persian Govt.	462
402 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 189	Apr. 9	Discusses question of Shah's proposed return to Persia: both he and Prime Minister would be relieved if H.M.G. would suggest to Shah he should remain in Europe till autumn.	463
403 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 190	Apr. 9	Summarizes recommendations in Military Commission report, signed by all Persian and British members. Scheme for re-organization of Persian Army under British direction.	464
404 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 177	Apr. 9	Instructions to inform Persian Govt. Anglo-Persian Oil Co. have acquired Khostaria concessions and transfer will be supported by H.M.G.	465
405 To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 426	Apr. 9	Refers to No. 397: it has been decided, in consultation with Persian Prime Minister and M.F.A., Shah should return to Persia by Baghdad route leaving May 1: financial question settled.	466
406 To SIR P. COX Tehran No. 85	Apr. 10	Records discussion with Persian M.F.A. of (1) possible U.S. participation in development of Persia, (2) Persian Govt.'s desire for direct negotiations with Soviet Russian Govt., (3) question of submission of Anglo-Persian Agreement to Majlis.	466

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
407	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 182	Apr. 11	Refers to Nos. 401 and 395: does not favour Persian Govt.'s proposal to conclude treaty with Soviet Russia, as opposed to previous proposal merely to exchange assurances: has informed Persian M.F.A. of this view.	469
408	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 465	Apr. 13	Reports conversation with Persian M.F.A., who will attempt to persuade Shah to postpone departure, and reduce retinue and expenditure.	470
409	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 201	Apr. 14	Refers to Nos. 407 and 401: Persian Prime Minister denies alleged intention to conclude formal treaty with Soviet Russia, but emphasizes necessity to issue communiqué explaining Persian attitude, and asks H.M.G. to indicate acceptable terms for proposed communiqué.	470
410	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 474	Apr. 15	Reports Persian M.F.A.'s conviction, in view of Shah's determination to return to Persia and threat to abdicate, that arrangements for his departure about May 1 should stand.	471
411	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 189	Apr. 15	Refers to No. 400: gives terms of reply to official French Note protesting against introduction without notice of new Persian customs tariff.	471
412	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 194	Apr. 17	Refers to No. 409: statement undesirable at present.	472
413	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 480	Apr. 18	Reports interview with Shah who promised to support Prime Minister and Anglo-Persian Agreement: he has been informed he undertakes journey at his own risk.	472
414	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 219	Apr. 21	Refers to No. 413. Discusses Shah's attitude to Cossack Division: Prime Minister requests Shah should be asked to instruct Col. Starosselski to accept Govt.'s proposal to merge Cossack Division and S. Persia Rifles into new national force: action will be taken before his return whether he agrees or not. Prime Minister advocates Shah's return by Meshed or Bushire to avoid necessity of visiting Mesopotamian Holy Places.	472
415	To EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 490	Apr. 24	Refers to Nos. 414 and 413: instructions to attempt to persuade Shah to act as requested by Sir P. Cox in support of Persian Govt.'s proposals regarding Cossack Division.	473
416	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 503	Apr. 26	Refers to No. 415 and reports interview with Shah who insisted Cossack Division question must await his return but finally promised tel. to Prime Minister agreeing in principle to proposals. Requests information regarding arrangements for Shah's journey.	474

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
417	TO SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 220	Apr. 27	Refers to Nos. 416 and 414: no objection to action being taken as proposed in view of Shah's obstinate attitude.	475
418	F.-M. VISCOUNT ALLENBY Cairo Tel. No. 449	May 7	Transmits message from Mr. Norman (newly appointed H.M. Minister, Tehran) reporting Shah's assurance of loyalty to Anglo-Persian Agreement and support of present Cabinet's policy, including Cossack Division proposals.	475
419	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 550	May 7	Reports Persian M.F.A. wishes to remind H.M.G. of their promise to consult Persia regarding Kurdistan frontier before conclusion of Turkish treaty.	475
420	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 253	May 8	Transmits views of Financial Adviser regarding British subsidy to Persia; states his agreement with them and requests instructions to pay May instalment.	476
421	TO EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 537	May 8	Refers to No. 419 and explains provision made for consideration of Persian territorial claims in Turkish treaty.	477
422	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 260	May 9	Submits résumé of recent news regarding Soviet moves at Astara and Lenkoran: loyalty of officers of Cossack detachment at Persian Astara doubtful.	478
423	TO SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 257	May 11	Suggests counter-measures to Soviet propaganda should be organized by member of British Legation in co-operation with Persian Govt.	479
424	TO MR. ALSTON Peking Tel. No. 180	May 12	Definite announcement regarding international status of Afghanistan to be avoided at present (see No. 377).	479
425	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 271	May 14	Transmits message from Persian Prime Minister regarding Soviet Russian and Turkish menace to Persian frontiers and Persian Azerbaijan and urgently suggesting measures to save situation.	479
426	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 268	May 14	Refers to No. 427 below and reports Persian press refuse to publish reply to anti-British and pro-Soviet articles: suggests Reuter message reporting article in <i>The Times</i> would ensure publication of British point of view.	481
427	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 269	May 14	Outlines possible Reuter message as suggested in No. 426.	481
428	TO SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 261	May 14	Refers to No. 420 and authorizes full payment of subsidy to Persian Govt. for May, half for June and quarter for July, on condition Indian Govt. share is paid: no further payments can be made.	483
429	TO SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 262	May 14	Records discussion between Persian M.F.A. and Chairman of Anglo-Persian Oil Co. regarding proposed change in Persian Govt.'s royalty: settlement would be of joint benefit. Sir J. Simon supports Oil Co.'s claim.	483

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
430	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 274	May 15	Reports Financial Adviser has taken up his duties: transmits his views regarding use of £2 million loan: hopes H.M.G. will help Persian Govt. to carry on administration until revenues increase.	484
431	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	May 15	Is confident that, given support of H.M.G., Anglo-Persian Agreement will survive with no more than minor modifications by Majlis.	485
432	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 267	May 18	Refers to Nos. 430 and 428: has urged Treasury and India Office to continue until Sept. monthly payments to Persian Govt.	486
433	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 268	May 18	Refers to Nos. 422 and 425, records decisions of Eastern Committee regarding military position in N. Persia, and asks for his views.	486
			<i>Note 4.</i> Minute by Lord Hardinge regarding probable unfortunate consequences of proposed withdrawal of British troops from Kazvin and Tabriz.	487
434	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 289	May 18	Transmits copy of tel. from Norperforce reporting Soviet landing near Enzeli and impending British evacuation.	488
435	To PERSIAN M.F.A. Paris	May 19	Note regarding Persian Govt.'s proposed communication to League of Nations stating that Anglo-Persian Agreement does not affect Persian sovereignty: Lord Curzon considers effect would be to invite League to intervene in Persian affairs and asks why Persian M.F.A. contemplates such a step.	489
436	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 601 (Part 1)	May 20	Transmits paraphrase of tel. from Persian Prime Minister to M.F.A. emphasizing danger to Persia resulting from recent events in Caucasus and urging despatch of gendarmes and funds to Azerbaijan, and reinforcement of British troops in Persia.	490
437	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 601 (Part 2)	May 20	Transmits paraphrase of further tel. to Persian M.F.A. reporting bombardment of Enzeli by Soviet ships, demands of Soviet commander, and Persian Govt.'s reply protesting against attack.	491
438	EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 602	May 20	Refers to Nos. 436 and 437: reports interview with Persian M.F.A. who has sent letter to League of Nations' Secretary protesting against bombardment of Enzeli, and urgently requests British help and advice.	491
439	To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 277	May 21	Records Cabinet decision to withdraw Enzeli force to Kazvin pending further developments: nature and extent of danger not clear: instructions to dissuade Persian Govt. from pessimistic view.	492
440	SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 296	May 22	Reports situation at Resht and Enzeli quiet: meeting held with diplomatic colleagues: Russian Chargé d'Affaires has decided to leave.	492

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
441 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 297	May 22	Refers to No. 440: reports interview with Persian Prime Minister and Acting M.F.A.: proposals for appeal to Allies, protest to League of Nations and negotiations with Soviet Govt. discussed.	493
442 EARL OF DERBY Paris Tel. No. 615	May 22	Refers to Nos. 438 and 439: Persian M.F.A. anxious to know Lord Curzon's views on Soviet attack.	495
443 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 301	May 23	Reports request of Persian Govt. for delay in withdrawal of British troops from Khorassan until intentions of Soviet Govt. towards Persia ascertained.	495
444 EARL OF DERBY Paris No. 1593	May 25	Reports articles in French press revealing satisfaction at British difficulties in N. Persia and hostility to Anglo-Persian Agreement.	496
445 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 283	May 27	Records interview with Persian M.F.A.: British policy explained: protest to Soviet Govt. authorized: advice given to Persian Govt. to support Anglo-Persian Agreement and submit it to Majlis.	498
446 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 320	May 28	Reports receipt of reply from M. Chicherin to Persian Prime Minister's protest against Enzeli bombardment: tone friendly and seems to dispel probability of immediate Soviet advance into Persia.	499
447 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 318	May 28	Has received copy of letter from Amir of Afghanistan to Shah expressing desire for closer relations and exchange of representatives, and stressing religious motive for friendship.	500
448 To SIR G. GRAHAME Paris No. 1799	May 31	Records interview with French Ambassador whose attention was called to attitude of French Minister at Tehran which continues unfriendly in spite of previous complaints.	500
449 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 332	June 3	Reports arrival and good reception of Shah: student demonstration against Anglo-Persian Agreement alleged to have been engineered by French Legation.	502
450 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	June 3	Personal tel. regarding announcement of Sir P. Cox's appointment as Mesopotamian High Commissioner: congratulations on his 'splendid' work in Persia.	502
451 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 307	June 5	War Office insist on execution of orders already issued for British withdrawal from Tabriz.	503
452 To LORD HARDINGE Foreign Office	June 5	Note from Mr. Balfour requesting him to explain to M. Cambon before next League of Nations' meeting real situation regarding Persian protest to League against Soviet attack on Enzeli. French opinion believes protest instigated by Britain. <i>Note 3. Report by Lord Hardinge of</i>	503
		interview with M. Cambon.	504

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
453 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 348	June 6	Refers to No. 425; states no action to safeguard frontiers possible without H.M.G.'s assurance of financial assistance; delay in receipt of such assurance and British troop withdrawals make Prime Minister's position impossible.	504
454 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 309	June 7	Arms and munitions, worth £500,000, ordered for Persian Govt.: Treasury opposed to despatching more until Financial Adviser's opinion received regarding requirements of other services to be financed from loan: Treasury being informed delay may prove disastrous: instructions to obtain Financial Adviser's views.	505
455 To SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 311	June 7	Persian M.F.A. urges that Shah should now publicly demonstrate support for Govt., summon assembly of notables and be pressed to dismiss Col. Starosselski.	505
456 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 356	June 8	Reports (1) interview with Shah, who promised friendship and support for Cabinet and British policy, and (2) Prime Minister's interviews with Shah, who maintained friendly attitude but refused to give definite promises and raised financial question again. Hopes Mr. Norman's influence may prevent split between Shah and Prime Minister.	506
457 SIR P. COX Tehran Tel. No. 361	June 10	Summarizes three telegrams from 'Red Revolutionary Committee of Persia' in Resht to Persian people and foreign representatives announcing formation of Soviet Republican Govt. in Gilan and denouncing British agreements with Persia.	507
458 MR. OLIPHANT Foreign Office	June 10	Record of conversation with Persian M.F.A. regarding Persia's complaint to League of Nations concerning Soviet action at Enzeli and possible results of forthcoming meeting of League Council and League's possible action: despite unfavourable French attitude and lack of British support M.F.A. determined to proceed with application to League: question of reply to M. Chicherin's tel. regarding British troops in Persia.	508
459 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 368	June 11	Reports (1) Shah's anxiety about Soviet menace to Tehran, (2) G.O.C. Norperforce's ability to defend city but desire for reinforcement of one brigade, (3) Prime Minister's reiteration of need for money and arms, (4) own belief that prolongation of present situation will lead to fall of Persian Govt.	511
460 LORD CHELMSFORD India No. 720 S	June 11	Tel. to Mr. Montagu suggesting reply Shah might send to Amir of Afghanistan's letter (see No. 447).	511

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
461 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 377	June 13	Reports Persian Prime Minister's unsuccessful attempt to persuade Shah to agree to plan for settlement of Cossack Division question. Shah admitted to Prime Minister he had ordered Col. Starosselski to refuse to relinquish command during former's absence in Europe.	512
462 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 378	June 13	Refers to Nos. 461 and 456: reports Persian Prime Minister's wish to resign because of ill health and Shah's loss of confidence in him: possible means of prolonging life of Govt. discussed. Gives reasons for unpopularity of Govt.	513
463 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 382	June 14	Reports conversation with Acting M.F.A. who gave reasons for Prime Minister's persistence in resolve to resign: Mr. Norman suggested Shah might be persuaded to support present Govt. by fear of loss of subsidy.	515
464 Mr. OLIPHANT Foreign Office	June 14	Memo. on probable results of withdrawal of British support from Persia, and alternatively on minimum help required to maintain Persia's independence and British position there: refers to Nos. 457 and 459.	517
465 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 388	June 15	Reports his consent (in order to reassure public opinion) to publication of Soviet Govt.'s tel. (see No. 458, n. 8), on condition allegations against British troops in Persia denied. Uncertain whether any Soviet troops remain on Persian territory.	519
466 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 387	June 15	Refers to No. 463: reports interview with Prime Minister regarding his proposed resignation: believes British policy would have greater chance of success with new, less unpopular, Govt. which could win over opponents of Agreement and summon Majlis: Prime Minister discussed his possible successors.	520
467 LORD HARDINGE Foreign Office	June 16	Record of a conversation with French Ambassador regarding continuing hostile attitude of French Minister at Tehran (see No. 448).	522
468 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 392	June 18	Refers to No. 462: reviews Persian situation. Support of unpopular Govt. and apparent unwillingness to defend Persia responsible for British policy's diminishing prospect of success: if request for money and arms not met it will be impossible to form new Govt.: situation can be saved by prompt British aid.	522
469 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 394	June 18	Refers to No. 468 and transmits Head of Military Commission's views on measures necessary to resolve Persia's internal and external military problems: gives numbers of reinforcements required.	524

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
470 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 393	June 18	Refers to No. 468 and transmits Financial Adviser's views on financial chaos in Persia: he believes reforms can be effected, given (1) military measures to prevent disintegration of Empire, (2) financial help, (3) expert assistance. Financial assistance should be under his control.	526
471 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 327	June 19	Refers to No. 395: Cossack Division should be reduced to size Persian Govt. can maintain: no further British subsidy can be paid.	527
472 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 330	June 19	Instructions to inform Persian Govt., if Financial Adviser agrees, that money will be advanced from loan to cover expense of moving troops to Azerbaijan, as this comes under provisions of Anglo-Persian Agreement.	528
473 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 399	June 19	Reports he has not paid June subsidy to Persian Govt., as authorized, in order to prevent handing over of sum demanded by Shah for expenses of European visit: hopes to ensure its expenditure on proper objects.	528
474 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 401	June 20	Refers to No. 477 below and reports arrangement made with Imperial Bank of Persia for short-term loan to pay Central Brigade: Financial Adviser says Persian deficit has increased, but agrees subsidy should be withheld for present (see No. 473).	529
475 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 398	June 20	Reports communication received from Persian Nationalist Party through Head of Military Commission that they are willing to form Govt. to support Anglo-Persian Agreement: no reply sent.	529
476 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 404	June 20	Reports audience with Shah regarding financial situation: failure to persuade Shah to withdraw request for payment of European expenses which he said he had been promised by Prime Minister: reduced subsidy being withheld.	530
477 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 400	June 21	Refers to No. 473: transmits Financial Adviser's views on question of control of expenditure: (1) continuance of subsidy essential, and (2) under present régime Financial Adviser must rely on personal influence to effect reforms, but under future constitutional régime continuance of subsidy might be conditional on grant, approved by Majlis, of definite powers of control to Financial Adviser. Mr. Norman agrees on need for continued subsidy and calling of Majlis as soon as possible.	531
478 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 406	June 21	Refers to No. 476 and reports interview with Acting M.F.A. regarding Shah's desire for repayment of travelling expenses out of subsidy: Mr. Norman intends to make written appeal to latter.	533

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
479 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 407	June 22	Transmits message from Financial Adviser stating Parliament and popular support essential for financial reform and success of Anglo-Persian Agreement.	534
480 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 339	June 23	No objection to despatch of detachment of South Persia Rifles from Kerman to Tabriz, but British and Indian personnel should be regarded as instructors and must not participate in action against external enemy.	534
481 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 342	June 23	Refers to Nos. 468-470, 472 and 466: Persian situation being carefully considered: still advisable to support present Prime Minister: there seems to be no suitable successor. Confidential instructions to point out to Shah his personal subsidy depends on active support for Prime Minister. <i>Note 5. F.O. tel. 344 of June 24: action to be deferred pending further instructions.</i>	535
482 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 343	June 23	Instructions to support Prime Minister's demand for full powers, if discretion is shown in action against disruptive elements. <i>Note 2. F.O. tel. 345 of June 24: action to be deferred.</i>	535
483 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 415	June 23	Reports conversation with Shah, who denied alleged reconciliation with Prime Minister and reiterated inability to work with latter: in circumstances he could only advise Shah to accept Prime Minister's resignation. Hopes H.M.G. will approve this action taken without instructions.	536
484 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 416	June 23	Refers to No. 483 and reports discussion with Shah of question of new Prime Minister: decision to ask Mushir-ed-Dowleh to form Govt. Emphasizes he must be able to promise H.M.G.'s moral and financial support to new Prime Minister.	537
485 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 417	June 25	Reports Shah hopes for continuance of personal subsidy if new Govt. acceptable to H.M.G. (see Nos. 484 and 483): recommends continuance while Shah remains well disposed.	538
486 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 422	June 25	Reports Shah has accepted Prime Minister's resignation and sent for Mushir-ed-Dowleh.	539
487 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 347	June 25	Refers to No. 484: policy recommended in No. 481 useless in view of Persian Prime Minister's resignation: Persian M.F.A. does not believe Mushir-ed-Dowleh will carry through policy of Anglo-Persian Agreement. Instructions to inform new Govt. and Shah, as suggested by Prince Firuz, that H.M.G.'s continued support depends on loyalty to Agreement, but to make no financial commitments without authorization.	539

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
488 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 424	June 25	Believes any new Govt. likely to ask for insertion of time-clause in Anglo-Persian Agreement, without which Majlis unlikely to accept it. Sees no objection: H.M.G. should consider question before officially raised.	540
489 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 418	June 25	Refers to No. 471: reports (1) Shah's request for continuance of subsidy for Cossack Division to prevent disorder among men, and (2) Head of British Military Commission's views.	540
490 Mr. OVEY Foreign Office	June 25	Memo. on present position in Persia. Anglo-Persian Agreement still corner stone of H.M.G.'s policy: recommends H.M.G. should support strong and friendly Prime Minister, endeavour to counter Communist propaganda, and give financial assistance under proper safeguards: considers Shah's attitude.	541
491 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 427	June 26	Refers to No. 481 and explains reasons for acting without instructions regarding change of Govt.: discusses qualities of new Prime Minister: believes new Govt. likely to be reticent on question of Anglo-Persian Agreement, but Agreement more likely to be accepted by Majlis than under last Govt.	545
492 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 428	June 26	Refers to Nos. 486 and 491 and reports discussion with Mushir-ed-Dowleh of (1) programme of new Cabinet including summoning of notables, proclamation promising to summon Majlis, and question of reference to Anglo-Persian Agreement, (2) use of part of British loan for defence and question of subsidy (refers to No. 472), (3) composition of Cabinet, (4) Cossack Division (refers to No. 489), (5) Shah's desire to send mission to Moscow to negotiate with Soviet Govt., (6) alleged demand for changes in Agreement, (7) question whether Mushir-ed-Dowleh should delay taking office until H.M.G.'s attitude clear. Has urged immediate formation of new Govt. and states future of British policy in Persia may depend on H.M.G.'s reply to questions concerning Agreement, financial aid and composition of new Govt.	546
493 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 433	June 27	Reports (1) agreement with Mushir-ed-Dowleh that proposed proclamation (see No. 492, § 1) should contain statement that execution of Anglo-Persian Agreement is in abeyance pending consideration by Majlis, and (2) Mushir-ed-Dowleh's urgent request for continuance of Cossack Division subsidy. Urges H.M.G. to agree.	549

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
494 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 435	June 28	Reports conversation with Mushir-ed-Dowleh regarding importance of new Cabinet taking up office as soon as H.M.G.'s reply received (see No. 492).	550
495 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 436	June 28	Refers to No. 487: assurances given to Mushir-ed-Dowleh who was disappointed at omission of promise of financial support: question of retention of Persian M.F.A. in present post to be discussed by Persian Cabinet.	551
496 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 446	June 30	Reports audience with Shah who emphasized dangers of military situation and difficulty of his own position in absence of Govt., and urgently requested assurances of financial help to ensure formation of Govt. Delay prejudicial to British position.	551
497 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 352	July 1	Refers to Nos. 485-6, 488-9, 491-5: states misgivings at Mushir-ed-Dowleh's assumption of office. H.M.G. cannot continue Shah's allowance, pay his travel expenses, or continue Cossack Division subsidy, but will continue monthly subsidy to Govt. for four months on condition Agreement submitted to Majlis within that time. H.M.G. do not favour return of exiles, nor proposed mission to Moscow. Instructions to inform Mushir-ed-Dowleh H.M.G. desire to continue this policy but require guarantees of good faith from new Govt.	553
498 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 353	July 1	Instructions to transmit personal message of thanks and appreciation to retiring Prime Minister.	554
499 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 453 (Part 1)	July 3	Refers to No. 497 and reports interview with Mushir-ed-Dowleh regarding H.M.G.'s policy. Question of payments to Shah discussed: regrets decision to stop allowance. Reports arrangement made with Imperial Bank of Persia in order to continue payment of Cossack Division. H.M.G.'s conditions for continuance of subsidy accepted.	554
500 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 453 (Part 2)	July 3	Reports conclusion of interview with Mushir-ed-Dowleh regarding No. 497: latter (1) gave views regarding use of loan for defence, inclusion of Mukhbar-es-Sultaneh in Cabinet, and proposed mission to Moscow, and (2) gave assurances of good faith, and will probably announce assumption of office tomorrow.	556
501 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 458	July 4	Urges retention of British forces at Meshed at least until new Cabinet firmly established, Agreement accepted, and Persia more able to defend herself against Soviet attack.	557

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
502 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 468	July 7	Reports movement of Soviet forces and advance on Tehran from Mazanderan: requests British forces should be instructed to cover (a) Tehran as well as Kazvin, (b) if need be, withdrawal southwards of Persian Govt. and European community.	558
503 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 465	July 7	Refers to No. 407: reports conversation with Persian Prime Minister regarding methods of counteracting Soviet propaganda, proposed missions to Moscow and Holy Places in Mesopotamia, Assembly of Notables, and suppression of newspapers.	559
504 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 365	July 7	Refers to No. 501: withdrawal of British forces in Khorassan imminent.	560
505 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 366	July 7	Transmits message from Mr. McClintock to Financial Adviser reporting stage reached in royalty negotiations between Persian Govt. and Anglo-Persian Oil Co. at time of Persian Govt.'s fall: Mr. McClintock believes negotiations can soon be concluded to advantage of Persian Govt.	560
506 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 475	July 9	Refers to No. 502 and reports views of Head of British Military Commission and Financial Adviser on proposed expedition to Mazanderan: requests permission for advance towards Resht by Norperforce.	561
507 MR. CHURCHILL Foreign Office	July 9	Memo. on recent events and present situation in Persia.	562
508 EARL CURZON Spa Tel. No. 37	July 10	Transmits copy of tel. to Tehran stating Shah's allowance cannot be continued.	563
509 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 371	July 10	Refers to No. 505: instructions to telegraph urgently whether Financial Adviser has enough information regarding oil negotiations to advise Persian Govt. to sign agreement negotiated by Mr. McClintock forthwith, or whether further information required.	564
510 EARL CURZON Spa Tel. No. 55	July 13	Transmits text of tel. to Tehran stating Persian Govt.'s anxiety about Soviet invasions should be alleviated by arrangement just concluded with Soviet Govt. which contains pledge Soviet Govt. will refrain from military action against British interests and Empire.	564
511 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 483	July 13	Emphasizes serious situation in Khorassan and probable disastrous results of Soviet invasion: British troops should remain in Khorassan for present.	565
512 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 377	July 15	Refers to No. 506: War Office do not authorize advance by Norperforce towards Resht.	566
513 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 503	July 18	Refers to No. 512: proposed advance would greatly assist British policy: risk slight in view of information transmitted in No. 510.	566

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
514 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 382	July 19	Instructions to inform Persian Prime Minister H.M.G. cannot regard assent of Majlis as essential to validity of Anglo-Persian Agreement: nor can suspension of agreement by Persian Govt. be reconciled with constant appeals for help to H.M.G.: financial and military advisers must be paid in full unless withdrawn.	567
515 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 509	July 20	Reports conversation with Persian Prime Minister: discussion of military situation, elections (<i>Note</i> 2), financial situation (refers to No. 491), and methods of counteracting Communist propaganda. Believes Govt. will continue to display energy given adequate British support.	568
516 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 510A	July 21	Refers to No. 515: transmits message from Financial Adviser stating that, in view of difficulties of his position and impossibility of financial reform, he intends to resign in two weeks unless Govt.'s attitude has changed. Gives his own comments on this message.	570
517 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 518	July 22	Reports Prime Minister has instructed Persian Chargé d'Affaires in London to give details of financial and military help needed in event of refusal of Kuchik Khan to negotiate submission.	572
518 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 384	July 22	Regards with disfavour return of deportees to Tehran: their presence likely to embarrass H.M.G.	572
519 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 516	July 22	Refers to No. 514 and begs leave to defer action, which would cause fall of Govt., pending H.M.G.'s consideration of Nos. 522-4 below.	573
520 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 521	July 23	Will inform Prime Minister of views expressed in No. 518. Do H.M.G. object to return of Nizam-es-Sultaneh, and of Suleiman Mirza and his brother?	573
521 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 519	July 23	Refers to Nos. 503 and 510: reports Persian Ambassador, Constantinople, is to proceed to Moscow to demand end of Soviet interference and propaganda in Persia: in return Persian Govt. willing to enter into commercial relations and negotiate postal and telegraphic convention.	574
522 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 523 (Part 1)	July 24	Refers to Nos. 514 and 519: surveys Persian situation and explains Govt.'s attitude and policies regarding Anglo-Persian Agreement and finance.	574
523 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 523 (Part 2)	July 24	Continues defence of policy of working with Persian Govt. who are honest and most likely to secure acceptance of Agreement by Majlis. H.M.G. would have to be prepared to support by force any more conservative Govt.	576

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
524	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 523 (Part 3)	July 24	Further disadvantages of supporting a conservative Govt.: alternatives are (1) to denounce present Agreement and negotiate new one, if chances of present one passing Majlis seriously diminish, and (2) to withdraw all British enterprises from N. Persia. Discusses means of inducing present Govt. to call Majlis.	577
525	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 388	July 27	Refers to No. 517: request for munitions conflicts with Mr. Norman's earlier opinion that no further issues of arms or equipment should be made to Persian Govt.: Lord Curzon cannot support request.	578
526	SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 560	July 28	Does not believe U.S. Govt. intend to grant loan to Persia, but War Dept.'s interest in Persia suggests Standard Oil Co. activity.	578
527	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 396	July 30	Persian Prime Minister's reported invitation to various Nationalists, including Taki Zadeh, to return confirms view that Suleiman Mirza and others should not have return facilitated (see No. 520).	579
528	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 544	July 30	Refers to No. 506 and reports conversation with the Shah who urgently requested British troops should not evacuate Menjil and said financial help was essential if Persian troops were to advance against insurgents.	579
529	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 548	July 31	Refers to No. 528: reports beginning of Menjil evacuation: asks whether H.M.G. can induce Soviet Govt. to observe undertaking not to interfere in Persian affairs.	580
530	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 400	July 31	Refers to No. 528: states order for Menjil withdrawal did not emanate from London: Mr. Norman can rely on co-operation of G.O.C. Baghdad and local Commander if evacuation of Tehran becomes inevitable.	580
531	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 401	July 31	Refers to No. 516: gives H.M.G.'s views on Persian situation: instructions to inform Prime Minister Persian Govt. cannot continue to claim advantages of Anglo-Persian Agreement, while repudiating obligations.	581
532	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 553	Aug. 2	Refers to Nos. 528 and 525: reports Persian Govt.'s attempts to ensure defence of capital: requests approval of arrangement made for payment of troops: reports disastrous effect of Menjil withdrawal on public morale and on Govt. in absence of encouragement from H.M.G. or reply to Mr. Norman's requests.	582
533	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 407	Aug. 5	Refers to No. 531: instructions to inform Shah that unless Persian Govt. loyally support policy of Agreement, H.M.G. may find it impossible, in view of British opinion, to afford any further military or financial help to Persia.	584

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
534	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 562	Aug. 6	Transmits views of Head of British Military Commission on Persian situation.	585
535	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	Aug. 6	Private tel. requesting Mr. Norman to reduce length and frequency of tels. to F.O.	587
536	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 411	Aug. 7	States War Office are sending orders not to withdraw two battalions on Persian line, unless Baghdad situation renders return to Mesopotamia essential (see No. 530).	588
537	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 564	Aug. 8	Begs leave to suspend action on No. 531 as resignation of Govt. would have bad effect on internal situation: refers to Nos. 522-4, 506, 499 and 497 and gives views on Persian situation and on points raised in No. 531.	588
538	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 565	Aug. 9	Refers to Nos. 533 and 506: believes best way to reduce British commitments in Persia is to support present Cabinet: H.M.G. not in position to dictate to Persia unless willing to resort to force. Asks permission to deliver sympathetic message from H.M.G. to Prime Minister.	591
539	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 571	Aug. 11	Refers to No. 534: transmits message from Financial Adviser, referring to No. 516 and reporting compromise reached with Persian Govt.: he is to act as Plenipotentiary in London negotiations for final settlement between Persian Govt. and Anglo-Persian Oil Co.: gives reasons for supporting present Persian Govt.: hopes question of Cossack Division will be solved.	593
540	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 422	Aug. 13	Refers to Nos. 537-8: H.M.G. have no wish to upset present Persian Govt. but desire that it should fulfil obligations and secure Majlis's consent to Anglo-Persian Agreement before end of Oct.: Kazvin and Hamadan troops to remain for present: Menjil reoccupation authorized: questions of Cossack Division and of finance considered. Refers to Nos. 539 and 506: no objection to amendments to Agreement proposed in No. 537.	595
541	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 581	Aug. 18	Reports alleged action taken by U.S. capitalists and Govt. regarding two concessions in Persia: rumours of U.S. offer of loan said to have been denied by M.F.A.	597
542	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 435	Aug. 21	States information received that Persian Minister in Washington has told State Dept. Persian Govt. would like U.S. interests to obtain oil concessions in N. Persia (see No. 541).	597
543	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 592	Aug. 26	Reports Cossack Division have captured papers proving invasion planned by Soviet Azerbaijan Govt.: he has supported Commander's request to Persian Govt. to inform Azerbaijan Govt. that Mughan will	598

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		be occupied unless attacks cease. Discusses position on Persian NW. frontier: asks whether H.M.G. can induce Soviet Russian Govt. to compel Baku Govt. to withdraw naval and military forces attacking Persia.	
544 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 600	Aug. 29	Recent defeat of Cossack Division before Enzeli renders assistance of Norperforce imperative to prevent Soviet troops moving south of Elburz: no doubt now of Soviet Russian responsibility for invasion.	599
545 To SIR A. GEDDES Washington Tel. No. 712	Aug. 30	Refers to Nos. 541 and 526: gives information regarding Anglo-Persian Oil Co.'s interest in Khostaria oil concessions.	600
546 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 444	Aug. 30	Refers to No. 541: instructions to inform Persian Govt. H.M.G. contest their view as to cancellation of Khostaria oil and mineral concessions and support Anglo-Persian Oil Co.'s legal purchase of oil concession: Company has been informed that any action regarding acquisition of mineral concession is deprecated at present.	600
547 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 610	Sept. 3	Refers to No. 506: reports Financial Adviser has left for England: gives conditions of loan he hopes to negotiate for Persian Govt. with H.M.G. on arrival.	601
548 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 456	Sept. 10	Refers to Nos. 547 and 540: H.M.G. cannot entertain idea of new loan: advance proposed must be repayable out of loan based on 1919 Agreement.	602
549 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 625	Sept. 11	Urges that order for withdrawal of certain British troops to Mesopotamia be reversed in view of Persian military and political situation.	603
550 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 462	Sept. 13	Discusses Cossack Division problem and attitude of Col. Starosselski: final solution must wait pending defeat of Soviet forces.	604
551 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 466	Sept. 15	Refers to No. 549: G.O.C. Mesopotamia has been instructed to avoid withdrawing troops from Norperforce and not to withdraw whole force without Cabinet authority.	605
552 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 631	Sept. 16	Reports and explains delays in progress of arrangements for elections and summoning Majlis: proposed plebiscite abandoned.	606
553 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 476	Sept. 20	Refers to Nos. 552, 531 and 540: expresses disappointment at slow progress: Persian Govt.'s delays point to breakdown of policy advocated by Mr. Norman: H.M.G.'s attitude unchanged.	607
554 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 646	Sept. 21	Reports Prime Minister intends to resign if H.M.G. do not agree either to accept (1) Financial Adviser's formula for repayment of proposed advance (see No. 547) without mention of £2 million loan, or (2) payment on account of part of sum owed by Anglo-	608

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		Persian Oil Co.: Persian Govt. in desperate need of money to pay troops: uncertain whether Cossacks will remain at front line.	
555 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 650	Sept. 24	Refers to No. 553 and reports elections being expedited: Persian Govt.'s problems regarding assembly of Majlis: question of proposed plebiscite.	609
556 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 654	Sept. 25	Refers to Nos. 553, 531 and 540: regrets that policy he has been forced by circumstances to pursue since arrival in Persia has incurred H.M.G.'s disapproval: explains and defends it.	610
557 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 489	Sept. 29	Refers to Nos. 556, 466, 481, 477, 474, 476, 478-9 and 487: reminds Mr. Norman of H.M.G.'s instructions and of his actions at time of resignation of previous Persian Govt. and installation of present Govt.	612
558 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 490	Sept. 30	Refers to No. 554: Oil Co. unwilling to make payment proposed by Persian Govt., but willing to pay this year's royalties two months in advance: asks whether necessary measures can be taken in Financial Adviser's absence.	613
559 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 494	Oct. 4	Instructions to impress upon Shah and Ministers Majlis must assemble and consider agreement this month if H.M.G.'s and Persian Govt.'s joint interests are to be saved. H.M.G.'s policy concerning submission to Majlis unchanged since 1919.	613
560 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 671	Oct. 6	Reports Persian Govt.'s reply (to No. 546) that they cannot admit legality of Khoshtar concessions obtained in absence of Majlis: has refused to accept this point of view.	614
561 To GEN. SIR A. L. HALDANE Baghdad Tel. No. 86467	Oct. 6	Tel. from War Office to G.O.C. Mesopotamia regarding policy to be followed in Persia: British forces in N. Persia not to be depleted without War Office approval: reinforcement of Norperforce impossible: problem of Cossack Division discussed. Asks for views, and for report on situation from G.O.C. Norperforce.	614
562 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 673	Oct. 7	Transmits contents of tel. from Baku from Persian Envoy to Russian Soviet Govt. stating concessions obtained from Baku Govt.	615
563 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 678	Oct. 10	Refers to Nos. 558 and 562: Persian Govt. accept Anglo-Persian Oil Co.'s offer of advance payment of royalties: discusses future financial problems.	616
564 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 501	Oct. 12	Refers to No. 563: states four months' extension of subsidy payments granted in June for convocation of Majlis cannot be extended.	617

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
565	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 508	Oct. 20	H.M.G. will not permit further financial aid to Persia out of public funds if Majlis does not meet and pass Agreement: attitude towards Financial Adviser's proposals for advances from other sources will be guided by circumstances.	617
566	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 703	Oct. 25	Reports that Cossack Division's second evacuation of Resht without military justification offers opportunity for dismissal of Col. Starosselski and Russian officers and substitution of British officers: Prime Minister, urged by himself and G.O.C. Norperforce, agrees, but is unwilling to appoint British officers. Believes a new Govt. could now be found to carry out proposed measures and submit Agreement to Majlis: requests approval of action taken and authority to take proposed action if necessary.	618
567	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 704	Oct. 25	Refers to No. 566: reports Prime Minister, after interview with Shah, unwilling to dismiss Col. Starosselski, but suggests appointment of another Russian or neutral officer in possible event of latter's resignation: Govt. will resign if demand for British officers maintained.	620
568	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 707	Oct. 26	Reports conversation with new Secretary of U.S. Legation who stated intention to ask Persian Govt.'s permission for American geologists to prospect for oil in N. Persia: requests instructions and suggests possible advantage of U.S. participation in N. Persian oil enterprise.	621
569	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 709	Oct. 26	Refers to No. 567: reports interview with Shah who finally accepted proposal for dismissal of Russian officers: possible new Govt. discussed.	622
570	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 710	Oct. 27	Refers to No. 569: reports interview with Shah and resignation of Persian Govt.: Shah is to send for Sipahdar-i-Azam. Believes Col. Starosselski should leave Persia as soon as possible. Shah requests that his allowance should be recommenced and that he should be allowed to make another European visit. Question of Shah's relations with Col. Starosselski.	624
571	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 711	Oct. 28	Refers to Nos. 570, 566 and 547: reports Sipahdar-i-Azam's request for continuance of monthly subsidy for two months as condition of formation of Govt.: suggests possible means of supplying money: explains policy of new Govt. regarding loan and Agreement.	626
572	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 715	Oct. 29	Gives information regarding recent career of Mussadiq-us-Sultaneh (Dr. Mussadiq).	628

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
573 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 521	Oct. 29	Refers to No. 570: finds difficulty in forming opinion in view of sudden complete change in Persian policy made without consultation with H.M.G.: must leave Mr. Norman and G.O.C. Norperforce to deal with situation: points out difficulties of replacement of Russian by British officers: financial question raised: Shah's subsidy cannot be renewed: H.M.G.'s intentions remain unchanged. Awaits further information.	628
574 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 718	Nov. 1	Reports measures taken to ensure Col. Starosselski's departure from Tehran: safe conduct given for his journey through Mesopotamia.	629
575 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 724	Nov. 4	Refers to No. 574: reports situation quiet and arrangements for departure of Russians proceeding: Col. Starosselski to leave Persia Nov. 6: election progress sufficient to permit opening of Majlis within a month: Govt. must have slight financial help to enable them to take office.	631
576 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 532	Nov. 5	Refers to No. 573: H.M.G.'s policy unchanged, but Cabinet insist on decision by Majlis regarding Agreement by end of year: subsidy cannot be continued, but H.M.G. willing to bear cost of reorganization and maintenance of Cossack Division. Parliament unlikely to vote for retention of British troops in Persia beyond the spring.	632
577 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 725	Nov. 5	Refers to Nos. 573, 566, 556, 540, 550, and 561: explains reasons for acting without consulting H.M.G. and accepts responsibility: comments on role of G.O.C. Norperforce.	633
578 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 730	Nov. 8	Refers to No. 576: reports unfortunate results of H.M.G.'s attitude on Persian situation: financial question prevents formation of Govt.: uneasiness caused by failure to reoccupy Resht: hopes War Office prohibition of advance by Norperforce beyond Menjil will be withdrawn.	635
579 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 536	Nov. 8	Refers to Nos. 568 and 541: hopes Secretary of U.S. Legation can be persuaded to postpone oil question until Majlis has met: question is extremely delicate.	636
580 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 544	Nov. 11	Refers to Nos. 578 and 576: H.M.G. must adhere to decision regarding financial aid for Persia: approves extension of lien of Imperial Bank for 4½ months for general purposes, but not for 2½ months proposed for payment of Russian officers: suggests reimbursement from Col. Starosselski's effects.	637

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
581	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 552	Nov. 16	Instructions to inform Sipahdar-i-Azam that newspaper report of immediate withdrawal of British troops from Persia is unfounded.	637
582	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 751	Nov. 18	Reports revelation that payments out of £2 million loan were made to Vossugh-ed-Dowleh and members of his Cabinet at time of signing of Agreement: proposed statement by present Prime Minister: asks for instructions: suggests loan might be made up to original sum.	638
583	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 754	Nov. 19	Repeats information received from Imperial Bank of Persia regarding payments referred to in No. 582.	639
584	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 560	Nov. 19	Refers to No. 471: expenditure on military forces in Persia must be carefully scrutinized: reduction of expenditure on S. Persia Rifles would make it easier to justify renewed contribution to Cossack Division which must be subject to repayment by Persian Govt.	639
585	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 565	Nov. 22	Refers to Nos. 582-3: present Prime Minister was member of Cabinet when payments were made, and must be held jointly responsible: suggestion to make up loan to original sum cannot be considered.	640
586	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 765	Nov. 25	Refers to No. 584: No. 576 appeared to indicate H.M.G. would bear whole cost of reorganizing Cossack Division: otherwise Persian Govt. justified in accusing him of breach of faith. Reports progress of plan for organizing new force able eventually to replace British troops: meeting of notables to be held to discuss plan. Slow progress of elections: Majlis unlikely to consider Agreement before end of year. Without financial help dissolution of S. Persia Rifles inevitable.	641
587	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 767	Nov. 25	Refers to No. 585: reports Prime Minister states he cannot accept contention that payment was first instalment of loan as money was not paid into Treasury: asks for H.M.G.'s help in settlement of question: will propose to Prime Minister postponement of any action.	643
588	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 766	Nov. 25	Refers to No. 582: member of Majlis friendly to British policy requests Reuters telegraph statement that loan remains intact as only method of removing bad impression which prejudices chances of Agreement in Majlis.	644
589	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 572	Nov. 26	Persian representative is reported to be attempting to conclude agreement with Soviet Russia: gives lines of alleged negotiations: instructions to express interest in negotiations and request news of their progress without revealing source of information.	645

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
590 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 772	Nov. 29	Refers to No. 589 which crossed Tehran No. 770 reporting progress of Soviet Russian negotiations and Soviet demands regarding troop withdrawals (<i>Notes</i> 2 and 3): proposed Persian reply states British troops will not advance beyond Menjil if Soviet troops withdrawn from Resht and Enzeli: proposed reply would be acceptable to G.O.C. Norperforce.	645
591 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 778	Dec. 1	Refers to No. 586: reports meeting of assembly of notables who rejected his advice and decided question of proposed new force could be decided only by Majlis: meeting had good effect of enabling British policy to be explained and convincing notables of need for Majlis.	646
592 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 779	Dec. 1	Reports measures taken in view of threatened invasion of Azerbaijan which Gen. Ironside considers chief danger to Persia.	647
593 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 578	Dec. 1	Refers to Nos. 588 and 583: transmits message from Vossugh-ed-Dowleh regarding payments made to Sarem-ed-Dowleh, Prince Firuz and himself on conclusion of Anglo-Persian Agreement.	648
594 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 781	Dec. 2	Reports conversation with Persian Prime Minister who stated only way to obtain support for Agreement in Majlis was to buy it: actual sum required not yet certain: Chief Manager of Imperial Bank shares Prime Minister's view.	648
595 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 785	Dec. 2	Suggests proposed loan should be increased from 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 tomans to obtain money to pay peasants for grain and assist refugees from Gilan.	650
596 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 580	Dec. 3	States Board of Directors of Bank have agreed to advance of 500,000 tomans: Financial Adviser requests delay regarding larger advance as he expects favourable conclusion of negotiations with Oil Co. soon.	650
597 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 790	Dec. 5	Refers to No. 586: reports efforts of Govt. to hasten opening of Majlis, and difficulties encountered.	651
598 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 792	Dec. 5	Reports receipt by Prime Minister of two telegrams from Governor-General of Azerbaijan (1) reporting approaches by Soviet agent, and (2) asking what attitude to adopt towards Turkish Nationalists. Has advised Prime Minister what replies to give: Turks mean to check Soviet advance.	651
599 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 793	Dec. 7	Refers to No. 586: reports Seyyid Zia-ed-Din and Sirdar Muazzam have persuaded Prime Minister to accept plan for military reorganization which will cost £1 million. Suggests sum should be made available from loan without informing Persian	653

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		Govt., loan to be made up from private sources: scheme may entail Cabinet changes, and is being kept secret until receipt of H.M.G.'s reply.	
600 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 797	Dec. 8	Refers to No. 580: not expecting H.M.G. to reject proposal for paying Russian officers, he had secured advance of money by Imperial Bank of Persia, who now require repayment: urges H.M.G. to reconsider attitude, particularly as 4½ months' extension of lien approved is no longer required.	654
601 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 585	Dec. 8	Enquires what steps Persian Govt. contemplate regarding future of S. Persia Rifles after cessation of British subsidy at end of year.	655
602 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 586	Dec. 8	Instructions to forward substance of tel. referred to in No. 590, <i>Note 2</i> , and to emphasize to Persian Govt. that British rights and interests cannot be exposed to infringement by any negotiations conducted by Persian Govt. with Soviet Russian or other Govts.	655
603 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 587	Dec. 8	Refers to No. 595 and (?) 602: financial tactics of Persian Govt. appear open to gravest suspicion, and confirm belief that they are heading towards disaster.	656
604 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 588	Dec. 8	Refers to Nos. 594 and 597: instructions to refuse to countenance Persian Prime Minister's suggestion for bribery of Majlis members: if Persian Govt. are unable to confirm Agreement within period named, H.M.G. can no longer support them.	656
605 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 794	Dec. 8	Refers to No. 599: reports Sirdar Muazzam states immediate formation of proposed force will protect deputies from threats of agitators and enable them to vote for Agreement: at present intimidation prevents deputies from leaving for Tehran.	657
606 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 592	Dec. 9	Refers to No. 599: proposed new military agreement does not seem to provide any solution and is impossible to defend: only means by which Persia can extricate herself from present situation is by constitutional action of Majlis.	658
607 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 801	Dec. 10	Refers to Nos. 601 and 599: Persian Govt. unlikely to be able to supply any money for S. Persia Rifles for some months, but their immediate disbandment would have disastrous political effect: suggests views of Chief of General Staff should be sought.	658
608 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 595	Dec. 11	Financial Adviser requests Persian Govt. should be informed of complete success of negotiations with Anglo-Persian Oil Co.	659

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
609 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 807	Dec. 11	Refers to Nos. 603, 497, 599 and 595: contests charges made against Persian Govt. and explains their financial plight and other problems; urges patience and requests earliest possible warning if H.M.G. decide to withdraw all support from Persia.	660
610 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 808	Dec. 12	Has carried out instructions in No. 604: explains Persian Prime Minister's attitude: believes imprisonment of leading agitators would silence opposition to Agreement: Prime Minister prepared to take this step if loan arranged and military reorganization accepted.	661
611 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 809	Dec. 13	Refers to No. 606: will assume, unless otherwise instructed, H.M.G. still desire force under British officers and maintain offer of monthly contributions (see No. 584): will attempt to devise less ambitious military plan. Explains why a few Russian officers still remain, and defends his policy and actions.	662
612 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 602	Dec. 16	Govt. of India have ordered immediate disbandment of Khorassan and Seistan Levy Corps.	663
613 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 819	Dec. 17	Summarizes note from G.O.C. Norperforce concerning arrangement for withdrawal of British troops from Persia after Apr. 1. Explains problems of evacuating European civilians in case of Soviet Russian invasion and requests earliest possible notice of date of withdrawal: asks if H.M.G. wish Legation and Consulate staffs to leave.	664
614 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 605	Dec. 19	Refers to No. 611: instructions to defer formation of force under British officers until Majlis meets and decides whether to accept Anglo-Persian Agreement which provides for such force.	665
615 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 825	Dec. 20	Refers to Nos. 606, 611, 599 and 576: reports Prime Minister hopes H.M.G. will reconsider refusal to accept military plan, and is unwilling to accept more modest scheme. It is hard to defend H.M.G.'s withdrawal from apparently definite undertaking to finance reorganization: hopes some means of raising money will be found.	665
616 MR. CHURCHILL Foreign Office	Dec. 20	Memo. on probable results of withdrawal of British troops from NW. Persia and possible measures to counteract dangers of Soviet advance or infiltration into Central and S. Persia.	666
617 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 829	Dec. 21	Refers to No. 615: comments on Secretary of State for War's reported remarks in Parliament on Dec. 15 on Persian situation.	669

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
618	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 608	Dec. 23	Refers to Nos. 617, 591, 599 and 606: since Persians prefer negotiations with Soviet Russia to military force under British officers, thus failing to take only step which could save country, H.M.G.'s only course now is to face probable collapse of N. Persia and protect British interests elsewhere.	670
619	To GEN. SIR A. L. HALDANE Baghdad Tel. No. 87319	Dec. 23	Tel. from War Office to G.O.C. Mesopotamia requesting views on (1) (in consultation with G.O.C. Norperforce) feasibility of withdrawal from Persia before Apr. 1, (2) time-table for withdrawal to position covering Basra, (3) proposal to hold Ahwaz-Kurna-Nasiriyeh line.	670
620	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	Dec. 24	Private tel. to Mr. Oliphant asking reasons for evident F.O. distrust of Persian Prime Minister: reports assertion that it is due to influence of Vossugh-ed-Dowleh.	671
621	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 833	Dec. 27	Refers to No. 602: summarizes and comments on text of two treaties (one secret) Soviet Russian Govt. offer to conclude; Prime Minister requests H.M.G.'s advice regarding reply: treaties contain no demand for abrogation of Anglo-Persian Agreement or withdrawal of British troops.	672
622	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 834	Dec. 27	Refers to No. 618: will act on instructions, but refers to Nos. 599, 615 and 609, and explains and defends attitude (1) of Persian Cabinet and assembly of notables regarding proposed plan for military reorganization, and (2) of Persian Govt. regarding negotiations with Soviet Govt.	674
623	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	Dec. 29	Private tel. from Mr. Oliphant: report in No. 620 is unfounded: Secretary of State does not distrust Persian Prime Minister, but believes him to be weak: no effort to save Agreement has been detected since change of Govt.	675
624	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 842	Dec. 31	Transmits copy of tel. to India referring to No. 613 and dissenting from Indian Govt.'s proposals regarding Persian situation.	675
625	To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 2	1921 Jan. 1	Transmits message from Financial Adviser to Persian Prime Minister: unless instructed to contrary, will arrange for transfer to Tehran of $\frac{1}{2}$ million tomans monthly (see No. 608): balance will last eight or nine months: hopes Persian Govt. will enforce proposed financial reforms.	677
626	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 4	Jan. 3	Refers to No. 570: reports Shah's desire to spend two months in Europe: believes he might not be able to return.	677
627	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 5	Jan. 3	Reports interview with Shah who asked whether H.M.G. would allow British troops to remain if Agreement accepted.	679

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
628	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 5	Jan. 3	Refers to Nos. 613 and 576: no orders given yet for military withdrawal from NW. Persia, which will not, however, be postponed beyond spring. Time limit for approval of Anglo-Persian Agreement by Majlis has expired and no further help can be given to Persian Govt.: suggests (1) evacuation of women, &c., (2) Legation staff and others should remain at Tehran as long as possible but should (3) withdraw to Ispahan when Tehran untenable. Asks for views.	679
629	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 3	Jan. 3	Refers to No. 621: gives views on proposed Perso-Soviet treaties: instructions to inform Persian Govt. that, if they can secure withdrawal of Soviet troops, H.M.G. are prepared to give definite undertaking they have no aggressive designs against Soviet Russia.	680
630	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 4	Jan. 3	Refers to Nos. 622, 586, 591 and 614: states discussion whether Persian Govt. wanted military reorganization under British officers is useless: it is now too late to consider plan.	682
631	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 8	Jan. 5	Refers to No. 628: Cabinet have decided evacuation of British troops should begin Apr. 1: requests views on question of foreign civilian communities.	682
632	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 9	Jan. 5	Refers to No. 631: gives terms of Cabinet decision regarding withdrawal from N. Persia: civilians to be warned that if they withdraw via Hamadan, road must be clear by Apr. 1.	683
633	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 8	Jan. 5	Reports activities of Soviet mission from Erivan at Tabriz Dec. 9-13: main object apparently to obtain sanction for consular appointments at Tabriz, &c.	683
634	LORD CHELMSFORD India Tel. No. 23 S	Jan. 5	Tel. from Viceroy to Secretary of State for India referring to No. 624; regrets Mr. Norman rejects Indian Govt.'s conclusions: believes Soviet proposals to Persia are genuine and calculated to undermine British position.	684
635	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 11	Jan. 6	Refers to Nos. 629, 628 and 621: reports conversation with Persian Prime Minister regarding Soviet Russian proposals: asks whether H.M.G. have reconsidered decision to disband S. Persia Rifles: reports Persian Govt. have agreed to reply as he advises to Soviet proposals: reports Soviet Govt. are pressing Persian Govt. to accept special Ambassador, named Rothstein.	685
636	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 10	Jan. 6	Refers to No. 626: instructions to inform Shah he will receive no support from H.M.G. if he decides to leave Persia at this critical juncture.	686

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
637	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 10	Jan. 6	Refers to Nos. 628 and 624: asks for official statement of H.M.G.'s present policy regarding Anglo-Persian Agreement, as Majlis is likely to open soon and Prime Minister proposes to submit Agreement to it.	686
638	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 14	Jan. 7	Refers to No. 626: reports further interview with Shah who was persuaded to postpone decision to leave Persia or abdicate in return for promise of month's warning of date of withdrawal of British troops: he refuses to go to Ispahan. Will recommend Shah should leave country earlier, should his brother seem likely to prove better ruler.	687
639	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 12	Jan. 7	Refers to No. 627: retention of troops in event of acceptance of Agreement would be impossible.	687
640	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 17	Jan. 8	Refers to Nos. 628, 631-2, 613 and 638: gives views on measures proposed for protection of British interests after evacuation: (1) women, children and non-essential civilians should be evacuated: arrangements being made, (2) foreign Legations will remain as long as possible, (3) believes Shiraz better seat for Govt. than Ispahan if Tehran evacuated.	688
641	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 16	Jan. 8	Refers to Nos. 636, 626 and 638: has used and will repeat Lord Curzon's arguments but has no hope of dissuading Shah further: other Persians likely to follow if Shah leaves country.	689
642	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 18	Jan. 9	Refers to No. 634: comments on Govt. of India's proposals regarding Persian situation: possibility of applying their plan if independent Govt. set up in S. Persia.	690
643	LORD CHELMSFORD India Tel. 44 S	Jan. 10	Tel. to Secretary of State for India referring to Nos. (?) 642 and 634: believes Persian Govt. should gamble on sincerity of Soviet proposals and remain in Tehran as long as possible: effect of possible Persian collapse on Afghanistan difficult to forecast.	691
644	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 27	Jan. 12	Reports Shah has given up plan to move Govt. to Shiraz, and intends to abdicate: Valiahd refuses to accept succession. Believes another member of royal family should replace Shah, as proclamation of republic would be disastrous.	691
645	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 22	Jan. 13	Refers to Nos. 641 and 638: Shah should be kept on throne if possible, but, if necessary, course outlined in final para. of No. 638 should be followed.	692
646	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 23	Jan. 13	Refers to No. 635: India Office have agreed to continued maintenance of S. Persia Rifles until Mar. 31 if Treasury accept moiety: is attempting to persuade Treasury	692

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		to agree: information regarding Rothstein will be sent for Persian Prime Minister: draft Anglo-Russian trade agreement contains clause prohibiting Soviet interference in Persia.	
647 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 24	Jan. 13	Replies to No. 637: time limit for acceptance of Agreement has expired, but it is unnecessary to inform Persian Govt. officially that H.M.G. regard Agreement as ended.	693
648 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 29	Jan. 13	Discusses Persian situation: Prime Minister, who is popular with lower classes but has lost confidence of upper and official classes, is unequal to present crisis: discusses proposals for strengthening Cabinet or replacing it.	693
649 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 31	Jan. 15	Refers to Nos. 635 and 648: reports his remonstrances to Prime Minister against certain unsatisfactory features of Persian reply to Soviet Russian proposals.	694
650 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 30	Jan. 15	Summarizes tel. from Mushaver-el-Mamalek complaining British interference hindering conclusion of Soviet Russian-Persian agreement: Soviet troops cannot withdraw while British troops remain.	696
651 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 34	Jan. 15	Reports interview with Shah, who has decided to remain in Persia: Shah agrees (1) to formation of new Govt. on lines considered in No. 648, and (2) that Majlis should be called. He believes it will accept modified Anglo-Persian Agreement: this is unlikely.	696
652 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 30	Jan. 15	Refers to No. 648: approves proposal to consult Nosret-ed-Dowleh: advent of strong Cabinet would be welcome.	698
653 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 31	Jan. 15	Refers to No. 646: Treasury sanction obtained for maintenance of S. Persia Rifles subsidy until Mar. 31.	698
654 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 33	Jan. 18	Refers to Nos. 638, 645, 644 and 640: (1) further report awaited regarding Shah's intentions, (2) instructions to maintain contact with Persian Govt. if they leave Tehran and to urge establishment of Govt. at Ispahan, (3) Major Noel to go to Bakhtiari area, (4) presence of portion of S. Persia Rifles at Ispahan desirable. Asks for his views.	698
655 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 39	Jan. 19	Refers to No. 651: reports Shah has withdrawn commission to form Govt. from Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek, who refused to call Majlis and submit Agreement: gives reasons for refusal to advise Shah on choice of Prime Minister.	699
656 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 41	Jan. 19	Reports meeting between diplomatic representatives and G.O.C. Norperforce regarding military situation and proposed arrangements for evacuation of foreign	700

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		communities in event of Soviet invasion after withdrawal of British forces: shares G.O.C.'s belief that invasion inevitable.	
657 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 45	Jan. 20	Refers to Nos. 654, 651 and 640: believes it may be possible to make agreement with Bakhtiari and persuade Shah to agree to transfer of Govt. to Ispahan: payment to S. Persia Rifles should be continued after Mar. 31.	701
658 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 46	Jan. 20	Refers to Nos. 649, 656 and 629: reports alleged preparations by Soviet authorities for march on Tehran after withdrawal of British troops: suggests H.M.G. should offer guarantee to Soviet Govt. in return for withdrawal of Soviet troops.	701
659 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 39	Jan. 21	Refers to No. 655: instructions to continue to use influence to secure strong Persian Govt. prepared to co-operate with him.	702
660 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	Jan. 21	Private tel. asking whether proposed evacuation of Tehran is necessary, in view of Shah's decision to remain (see No. 651), proposed treaty with Soviet Russia, &c. British prestige would be further damaged by abandonment of capital.	703
661 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 44	Jan. 22	Refers to No. 657: is unable to press for further payments to S. Persia Rifles: suggests Persian Govt. should use part of sum from Anglo-Persian Oil Co. (see Nos. 608 and 625) to maintain force.	703
662 LORD CHELMSFORD India Tel. No. 107 S	Jan. 22	Tel. to Secretary of State for India giving views of Govt. of India on Persian situation: believes British position might be retrieved by repudiation of Anglo-Persian Agreement and drastic revision of Turkish treaty: Indian Govt. unable to give financial aid if Persia divided under Soviet Govt. in north and Govt. supported by H.M.G. in south.	704
663 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 56	Jan. 24	Refers to No. 659: reports interview with Sipahdar-i-Azam: Majlis to be summoned and commission to be formed to propose modifications in Anglo-Persian Agreement: chief of these likely to be substitution of neutral, perhaps Belgian, for British officers in Persian Army: financial needs urgent.	706
664 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 50	Jan. 25	Refers to No. 663: H.M.G. still hold view expressed in No. 647 that time limit for Agreement has expired: proposal for Belgian officers not practical.	707
665 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	Jan. 25	Private tel. referring to No. 660: no universal panic exists in Tehran, or in British or other Legations: gives reasons for such apprehensions as exist, including action of Imperial Bank of Persia: doubts feasibility of proposed transfer of capital to Ispahan.	708

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
666 LORD CHELMSFORD India Tel. No. 128 S	Jan. 27	Tel. to Secretary of State for India: refers to No. 662: transmits views of Major Dobbs regarding probable effect on Afghanistan of possible Soviet domination of Persia.	709
667 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 66	Jan. 28	Refers to Nos. 640, 662 and 657: reports Bakhtiari khans' proposals for co-operation in event of collapse of Persian Govt.: plan entails condemning most of Persia to rapacious rule, and end of attempts at reform: regards it as a desperate last resort, but asks whether H.M.G. are prepared to finance Kawam-ul-Mulk and Bakhtiaris.	710
668 SIR P. COX Baghdad Tel. No. 291 S	Jan. 29	Tel. to Secretary of State for India giving views on Persian situation and suggesting two lines of policy for adoption according to circumstances.	711
669 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 71	Jan. 30	Refers to Nos. 664, 540, 659 and 647: solution to problem of Agreement must be found: believes conciliatory attitude regarding proposed modifications most likely to be successful.	714
670 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 79	Feb. 3	Comments on No. 668: second line of policy, involving Persia in situation described in No. 667, would entail provision of further funds by H.M.G. and be less effective in maintaining British interests.	715
671 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 67	Feb. 8	Requests recommendations on steps to be taken to disband S. Persia Rifles and withdraw British personnel.	717
672 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 68	Feb. 8	Refers to Nos. 669, 576 and 604: time limit for Agreement has expired: no reason to make further statement to Persian Govt.	717
673 To MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 69	Feb. 8	Refers to No. 667: is endeavouring to hasten Major Noel's departure for Tehran, but can give no financial undertakings.	717
674 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 92	Feb. 10	Refers to No. 649: is forwarding copy of tel. received by Prime Minister from Mushaver-el-Mamalek reporting Soviet Russian proposals for mixed commission to arrange mutual withdrawal of troops: Soviet representative to leave for Persia: Persian amendments accepted by Soviet Govt. and treaty will shortly be signed.	718
675 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 99	Feb. 11	Refers to No. 659: urges undesirability of proposed seizure by Imperial Bank of Persia of balance of oil money lying to credit of Persian Govt. to pay latter's debts to former: this would render Govt.'s financial position worse than ever, and be regarded in Persia as an act of spoliation.	719
676 MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 96	Feb. 11	Refers to No. 663: reports Persia has been without Govt. for a month: Sipahdar and others unable to form Govt. because of H.M.G.'s insistence on summoning of Majlis and submission of Anglo-Persian	720

NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
		Agreement which now has no chance of acceptance: has urged appointment of strong Prime Minister but Shah unwilling without promise of continued British support.	
677 Mr. ARMITAGE-SMITH Foreign Office	Feb. 14	Memo. on Anglo-Persian Oil Co.'s financial proposals for Persia: advocates acceptance of offer of advance of oil royalties but rejects proposal for loan. Submits own suggestions for a policy which would depend on taking over Southern Customs, maintaining S. Persia Rifles and concentrating on Central and S. Persia.	721
678 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 81	Feb. 16	Refers to No. 676: states Mr. Norman has misunderstood attitude of H.M.G. who, since expiry of time limit for Agreement, have no further interest in summoning of Majlis. H.M.G. do not intend to denounce Agreement: responsibility for its rejection rests with Persian Govt.	727
679 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 113	Feb. 17	Refers to No. 676: reports formation of Govt. by Sipahdar, who asks which policy H.M.G. prefer: (1) summoning of Majlis, stating Agreement abandoned and new one to be negotiated, or (2) postponement of Majlis pending examination of question by commission (including British Legation representative). Nosret-ed-Dowleh suggests postponement of reply will cause fall of Govt. and his own accession to power.	727
680 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 118	Feb. 20	Reports Persian Govt. have received Soviet Russian proposal for immediate assembly of mixed military commission: H.M.G. are requested to nominate representative. Reports Persian reply to Soviet Russian request for permission to send representative to Persia.	728
681 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 121	Feb. 21	Reports entry into Tehran of detachments of Cossacks under Col. Riza Khan, who professes loyalty to Shah, and determination to create strong Govt. to face Communist threat. Seyyid Zia-ud-Din probable new Prime Minister: Farman Farma and Nosret-ed-Dowleh arrested: has advised Shah to accept new leaders' demands.	729
682 To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 88	Feb. 22	Refers to No. 680: British representative cannot take part in proposed military commission as H.M.G. unable to treat British evacuation of Persia as arrangement involving reciprocal action by others.	730
683 Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 125	Feb. 25	Refers to No. 681: reports proclamation by Shah that he has appointed Seyyid Zia Prime Minister in order to end continuous crisis: transmits Seyyid Zia's proposed policy: new Govt. hope for unostentatious but effective British help.	731

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	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
684	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 129	Feb. 26	Requests War Office should be persuaded to hand over to Persian Govt. any stores and munitions which can be spared by Norperforce to assist vital reorganization of Persian Army.	732
685	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 130	Feb. 26	Refers to No. 683: reports reintroduction of Mr. Balfour into Ministry of Finance, considerable economies and reforms in administration, appointment of Governor for Gilan who will request withdrawal of Soviet troops, and military measures to strengthen defence against Soviet aggression. Bakhtiari have promised to support Govt. and order reigns in Tehran.	733
686	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 132	Feb. 28	Summarizes 13 chief points of new Prime Minister's policy declaration: they include reform and development in finance, administration and army; eventual abolition of Capitulations, denunciation of Anglo-Persian Agreement (but good relations with Britain to be maintained) and establishment of good relations with Soviet Russia.	734
687	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 94	Feb. 28	Refers to No. 683: states intention to maintain for present principle laid down in No. 678 as likelihood of success of new régime not yet certain: Persian Govt., however, cannot denounce Agreement and then extract main part of its advantages. British withdrawal from Kazvin cannot be delayed.	735
688	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 135	Mar. 3	Refers to Nos. 687 and 678: states new Govt.'s success will depend on amount of British help offered and on denunciation of Anglo-Persian Agreement: points out advantages of Govt.'s reform programme and British community's satisfaction at improved situation: urges compliance with Govt.'s pressing request for loan of about 20 British officers.	735
689	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 97	Mar. 3	Refers to Nos. 686-7: if Persian Govt. denounce Agreement, loan agreement will be cancelled and Persian Govt. held responsible for repayment with interest of first instalment and of value of arms supplied: it is also open to H.M.G. to denounce customs tariff.	737
690	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 136	Mar. 3	Reports Shah has telegraphed to H.M. The King (No. 691 below) asking for retention of British troops in N. Persia until Sept.: Shah anxious request should remain secret on account of possible effect on Soviet Govt.	737
691	H.I.M. THE SHAH OF PERSIA Tehran Tel. Unnumbered	Mar. 6	Tel. to H.M. The King (see No. 690 above).	738

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
692	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 103	Mar. 8	Question of Shah's proposed departure from Persia must be decided by himself and his advisers: points out material difficulties: H.M.G. have no objection, but are not prepared to welcome him in England.	738
693	H.M. THE KING London Tel. Unnumbered	Mar. 10	Reply to No. 691 regretting impossibility of retention of British troops in Persia after end of Mar.	739
694	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 150	Mar. 10	Refers to No. 683: Persian Govt. propose to obtain British officers to reorganize army, British assistants for Financial Adviser, Swedish officers for gendarmerie, French adviser and assistants for Ministry of Justice, and U.S. adviser on agriculture with assistants.	739
695	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 156	Mar. 12	Refers to No. 694: Persian Prime Minister requests (1) early and favourable reply to request for loan of officers, and (2) indication of H.M.G.'s attitude towards policy of new Govt. which depends on British moral support.	740
696	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 117	Mar. 14	Refers to Nos. 684 and 688: Army Council unwilling to lend British officers or transfer military stores to Persian Army, fearing indefinite further commitments: presence of British officers likely to afford opportunity to Soviet Govt. to refuse to evacuate Persia. H.M.G. therefore not prepared to meet wishes of Persian Prime Minister.	740
697	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 163	Mar. 16	Refers to No. 696: states British refusal to supply officers or stores would force Persian Govt. to apply to France or other European power for help and, failing that, to welcome Soviet advance: early decision urgent.	741
698	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 121	Mar. 16	Treasury have agreed to final contribution of £225,000 to S. Persia Rifles with view to their disbandment or incorporation in Persian Army.	742
699	Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 164	Mar. 17	Reports receipt of note from Persian M.F.A. (1) announcing Persian Govt. intend to denounce Anglo-Persian Agreement, (2) renewing professions of goodwill, (3) hoping Persia may still benefit from British advisers and capital, (4) requesting views of H.M.G. Urges transmission of encouraging reply.	742
700	To Mr. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 123	Mar. 17	Refers to No. 695: transmits conditions on which WarOffice prepared to permit British officers to volunteer for service in Persia: instructions to explain to Prime Minister that pay and conditions of service must be satisfactory: is similarly prepared to consider favourably question of financial assistants.	743

	NO. AND NAME	DATE	MAIN SUBJECT	PAGE
701	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 167	Mar. 17	Refers to No. 694: Persian Prime Minister urgently requests H.M.G.'s views on proposal to announce intention to seek experts from other countries when issuing statement on foreign advisers: aim is to allay Nationalist hostility: Prime Minister reiterates desire to co-operate with H.M.G.	744
702	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 169	Mar. 18	Refers to Nos. 700, 696 and 684: hopes refusal to sell stores to Persian Govt. will be reversed.	745
703	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 170	Mar. 18	Refers to No. 699: Prime Minister hopes H.M.G. will enable him to publish a statement that they no longer insist on Persian acceptance of Agreement but will continue to extend encouragement and assistance to Persia. Such a communication would increase British prestige and strengthen Prime Minister's position.	745
704	TO MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 125	Mar. 20	Refers to Nos. 702-3: H.M.G. have never insisted upon acceptance of Anglo-Persian Agreement, and have not lost interest in Persia, but Persian responsibility for repayment of loan, &c., remains, and evidence of friendship must come from Persian Govt.: no prospect of new British loan: no objection to foreign advisers in minor Ministries.	746
705	MR. NORMAN Tehran Tel. No. 192	Mar. 31	Refers to Nos. 704, 688, 681 and 699: reports Persian Govt. (1) intend to recover £131,000 and repay it and pay for arms supplied, (2) do not ask for loan, (3) request H.M.G.'s assistance concerning appointment of financial adviser and assistance, (4) have dissolved S. Persia Rifles who will be incorporated in gendarmerie in order to prevent Soviet Govt. complaining of formation of army under British officers. Lists officers required for gendarmerie.	746

CHAPTER I

Turkey

February 12–December 31, 1920

No. 1

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck¹ (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received February 13, 2.30 p.m.)

*No. 127 Telegraphic [E 103/3/44]*²*

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, February 12, 1920, 8 p.m.

My telegram No. 109 of 6th February.³

Nationalist outbreak of antagonism to Allies would have most disastrous repercussion on Eastern situation generally, which it would, in my opinion, be most desirable to avert.

If, therefore, it has not been definitely decided to deprive Turks of Constantinople and Smyrna, I suggest that, even if it is not possible to make any immediate publication of announcement, I may at least be authorised to make some tranquillizing communication in that sense which might tend to allay present excitement and obviate to some extent danger of excesses now threatened.

My French colleague and my Italian colleague are telegraphing in similar sense.

¹ H.M. High Commissioner at Constantinople and Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean.

² Throughout this volume an asterisk after the file number denotes that the document has been printed from Confidential Print, see Preface, pp. vii, viii.

³ Vol. IV, No. 681.

No. 2

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received February 14, 9.20 a.m.)

No. 129 Telegraphic [E 122/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, February 13, 1920, 2.15 p.m.

My telegram No. 109.¹

On February 10th General Milne² informed me that he had received very disquieting news from his Control Officer at Konia, who informed him that

¹ Of Feb. 6. See No. 1, n. 3.

² General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Army of the Black Sea.

religious dignitaries had been set on to excite the population and that massacres were apprehended within a few days. While discounting danger of immediate massacre I feel that situation in interior, especially since Marash incident,³ justifies grave anxiety. As result of Conference with my French colleague, it was decided that Political Officer of the three High Commissioners should visit Grand Vizier on (Monday?)⁴ and make serious representations to him, pointing out that after recent reconstruction of Government and vote of confidence in Chamber,⁵ Central Government could not divest itself of responsibility for acts of Nationalists. His attention was called to various duties entailed by this establishment of complete identity between Government and Nationalists and amongst others that of guarding against massacres.

³ Large numbers of Armenians had been massacred by Turks at Marash at the end of January and early in February; cf. Vol. IV, Nos. 423, 424 and 681. In his telegram No. 18 of Feb. 21 (not printed) H.M. Consul-General at Beirut reported that 'Americans, who left Marash with French, estimate number of Armenians already massacred in or around Marash at 5,000'. Other estimates were much higher, cf. Vol. VII, No. 38.

⁴ Feb. 16.

⁵ See Vol. IV, No. 683.

No. 3

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 123 Telegraphic [E 103/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 16, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 127 of 12th February:¹ Constantinople.

You may make public the fact that it has been decided by the Conference not to deprive the Turks of Constantinople.² You should, however, add that, unless the massacres of Armenians and the attacks on Allied troops in Asia Minor cease immediately, the peace terms will probably be modified to the detriment of Turkey.

(Repeated to Paris, No. 243, and Rome, No. 67.)

¹ No. 1.

² This decision had been taken by the First Conference of London on Feb. 14; see Vol. VII, No. 6, minute 2.

No. 4

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 11)*

No. 235 [E 1358/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, *February 17, 1920*

My Lord,

With reference to previous correspondence relative to the recent incidents in the Marash area,¹ I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a note

¹ See No. 2, n. 3.

and enclosures from the Sublime Porte, and copies of two notes to the Porte, copies of which have been communicated to me by my French colleague.²

2. Having observed a tendency on the Turkish side to attempt to play the British off against the French in this business, I sent Mr. Ryan³ with a message to the Grand Vizier on February 5th. In this message, which was delivered with the concurrence of my French Colleague, I said that I had been apprised of the terms of the French representations to the Porte regarding the Marash incidents, and that I wished it to be understood that I was entirely in agreement with the French point of view. The replacement of British by French troops in Syria and Cilicia was the result of the decision of the Peace Conference.⁴ The announcement of that decision had been the signal for an organised agitation on the part of the so-called National Movement. Moustapha Kemal himself⁵ had issued a manifesto couched in terms of violent menace. While I had no independent information, and while I deplored, as much as the Grand Vizier himself, the situation which evidently now existed, I could only suppose that the French troops charged with the execution of the decision of the Conference had been attacked in fulfilment of Moustapha Kemal's threat. The Turks accused the French of brutal and provocative conduct, but the French had no interest in outraging the local population, unless they were compelled to take drastic action in self-defence.

3. Mr. Ryan pointed out that the French contention that formations of the regular army were implicated in the attack on the French, was borne out by what we ourselves knew of the connection between the regular army and the national forces in General Milne's area. He also reminded the Grand Vizier that one of the first acts of the High Commissioners, after his advent to power,⁶ had been to warn his Highness that the national forces could only be regarded henceforward as part of the forces of the Turkish Government.⁷

4. The Grand Vizier, who was very depressed, refused to admit that the French had been the object of attack, or that Turkish regulars were in any way concerned in the activities of the Nationalists. He took note of my declaration of solidarity with the French, but, speaking personally, he accused them bitterly of having themselves fomented the National Movement.

5. Mr. Ryan delivered a similar message to the new Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the absence of the Minister who was indisposed.⁸

I have, &c.,

J. M. DE ROBECK,
High Commissioner

² These enclosures are not printed.

³ Second Political Officer of the British High Commission at Constantinople.

⁴ See Vol. I, No. 57, minute 5 and n. 10, and Vol. VII, No. 12, p. 103.

⁵ The Turkish Nationalist leader.

⁶ On Oct. 2, 1919.

⁷ See Vol. IV, No. 553.

⁸ Admiral de Robeck's conduct was approved in Foreign Office despatch No. 198 of March 19, not printed.

No. 5

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 151 Telegraphic [E 143/106/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 22, 1920, 11 p.m.*

We gather from General Milne's telegram to War Office No. 98 of February 8th¹ that the Greeks, whether on grounds of real or simulated fear of the aims of Nationalist Army want authorisation under given conditions and subject to General Milne's consent to take the offensive against the Turks in the Smyrna area.

You should warn Turkish Government that any attack made by Ottoman forces on Greek positions would involve a counter attack by the Greeks and would gravely jeopardize the position of the Turks in the Peace Treaty.

I am making a similar communication to M. Venizelos in London.²

¹ Not printed.

² See No. 7 below. M. Venizelos, Greek Prime Minister, was in London from Feb. 15 to April 14 in connexion with discussions by the Inter-Allied Conference there of the Turkish peace treaty and the future of Smyrna (see, e.g., Vol. VII, Nos. 8, 24 and 26).

No. 6

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 4)

No. 273 [E 969/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, *February 23, 1920*

My Lord,

I took the opportunity afforded by my return visit to the new Minister for Foreign Affairs¹ on 19th February to read to him Your Lordship's telegram No. 123 of 16th February, relative to the future of Constantinople.²

2. I thought it advisable, in view of the endeavours which will certainly be made by the extremists of the National Movement to exploit the decision of the Conference as a victory achieved by them, to speak very frankly to the Minister about the present situation, and the attitude of antagonism to the Allies taken up by the 'National Movement.' I had been authorised, I said, to make a statement which should be very comforting to the Turkish Government and all patriotic Turks. That assurance, however, was not unaccompanied by reservations. In the part of the telegram containing these reservations, I noted specially the references to 'massacres of Armenians,' to 'Allied troops,' and to 'attacks.'

3. It was true, I said, that the only places in which Armenians were now being massacred were in Cilicia; that I had no particulars of such massacres beyond the undoubted fact that Armenians had been massacred in several villages; and that these massacres were the outcome of the deplorable

¹ Sefâ Bey: see Vol. IV, No. 683.

² No. 3.

incidents at Marash and elsewhere. I would not repeat what I had said on previous occasions about these incidents, but in the present connection I desired once more to emphasise my view that the incidents were the fulfilment of a threat deliberately formulated by Mustafa Kemal Pasha some time ago, and any massacres arising out of them were massacres committed under the auspices of the National Movement.

4. I had also accentuated, I said, the words 'Allied Troops' and 'attacks.' 'Allied' included, for His Majesty's Government, not merely the French and Italians, but also the Greeks. 'Attacks' included not only attacks by regular troops, but also attacks by the so-called National Forces. On the Minister's observing that the Government could not be held responsible for all the acts of the National Forces, I insisted, and I repeated several times subsequently in the conversation, that the present Grand Vizier had taken office with a programme of conciliating the National Movement; that after the opening of Parliament, he had secured an unanimous vote of confidence after negotiations with the National Movement, which culminated in the sacrifice of three of his Ministers;³ and that in these circumstances the Government could only be regarded as a reflex of the Movement.

5. The Nationalists, I observed, claimed to be patriots, but they were serving their country very ill; they had been consistently disloyal to their own Sovereign, whose authority they had done their best to diminish. Instead of working for peace and the true happiness of the Turkish people, they had fomented strife and disorder and had done so more particularly by following a policy of irritating and provoking the Allies.

6. I spoke of the attitude of the Turkish Military Authorities. I instanced a recent request by the Ministry of War to move troops from Broussa to repress some local disturbances at Bigha. General Milne had refused the request, and I fully concurred in his refusal, because there seemed to be no military necessity for the movement, and because it had been a consistent policy of the Allied Authorities to avoid anything which might lead to civil war. General Milne, I said, looked at things from a military and not from a political standpoint. He was applying to the present request the same rules which he had applied when Damad Ferid Pasha wished to send troops against the Nationalists.⁴

7. I directed the Minister's attention to another case in which the Turkish Military Authorities seemed anxious to find a pretext for re-disposing troops, and that in an area specially interesting to His Majesty's Government, namely, South-Eastern Kurdistan. The Military Authorities had made use of a cock-and-bull story of threatened attacks by Armenians and Nestorians on Moslem tribes in the south of the Van Vilayet. I asked the Minister to read carefully the note which I had just sent him on this subject (see my despatch No. 249/M. 2136 of 19th February).⁵

8. I also drew the particular attention of the Minister to the latest collective Note of the High Commissioners demanding respect for the 'Milne line'

³ See Vol. IV, No. 683.

⁴ See *ibid.*, No. 529.

⁵ Not printed.

in the Smyrna area (see my despatch No. 259/M. 2613 of 20th February).⁶ I refused to be drawn into a discussion, in which he sought to engage, regarding the merits of the delimitation, or of the possibility of atrocities by Greeks if the Turks receded. The delimitation had been undertaken, I said, in order to give satisfaction to the Turks, who in the summer legitimately wished to know where they were. When it had been effected, the Turks were the only people who refused to respect the decisions.

9. It appeared to me, I observed, that when the Turkish Government wished to use force it was never at a loss for troops, but that when it was a question of satisfying the Allies it always proclaimed itself powerless. In this connection I once more mentioned the recent raid on the arms and ammunition dump at Ak-Bash in the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Grand Vizier had told me he disapproved entirely of this raid. The Porte had officially expressed regret, and had said that they were making every possible enquiry. Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal Pasha had given the show away by printing in a Konia newspaper a letter claiming the whole credit of the Ak-Bash incident for the National Forces, and vaunting the exploit, including the arrest of Allied guards, as a victory achieved by a brave comrade of his from Balıkesir. Mustafa Kemal had signed this letter on behalf of the Committee of the Movement, a Committee most of whose members were now in Constantinople.

10. The Allied Representatives had, I said, done their best to show confidence in the Turkish Government. They had scrupulously refrained from meddling in internal politics. A striking example of their trust had been the repatriation of Turkish prisoners of war from Egypt. I had had more than one report of the recruiting of these men for the National Forces.

11. I adverted to representations which the Minister had made to me two days previously about the working of the Allied Censorship of the Press. These representations were identical with representations made to a member of my staff by the Grand Vizier and the Minister of the Interior. I said I believed myself to be right in thinking that the great importance attached to this matter by the Government was due to a desire to placate the deputies. I had made enquiries. I would not now go into the whole matter, but I would mention one fact which I had elicited, namely, that the speeches of some of the deputies themselves were of such violence that they had far better be kept within the four walls of the Chamber than be reported for popular consumption here, or telegraphed to the European capitals in which the fate of Turkey was being decided. Nor was it only in the Chamber that inflammatory language was held. I called the attention of the Minister to the deplorable impression created by the speeches made at a meeting graced by the presence of the Heir-Apparent (see my telegram No. 85 of 28th January).⁷

⁶ Not printed. This note of Feb. 16 had again requested the Turkish Government to withdraw their forces to the line earlier prescribed by Gen. Milne, namely, 'to a distance of 3,000 metres from the line laid down by the Peace Conference as the limit of the area of Greek military occupation in Asia Minor'; cf. Vol. I, No. 70, minute 9 and Appendix H.

⁷ Not printed. The reference is to a meeting held at Istanbul University on Jan. 25 to celebrate the birthday of the pro-Turkish French writer, M. Pierre Loti.

12. Incidentally I drew the attention of the Minister to the prosecution of two Armenian journalists for printing an attack on the National Movement, which had been passed by all the censors, and asked him what impressions he thought such a prosecution must create when the press of the National Movement was using the most unbridled language throughout the provinces. I obtained a promise that the proceedings against the two Armenians would be stopped.

13. After a passing reference to the state of the Turkish prisons, on which the Inter-Allied Commission had just reported, I brought my statement to a close. I repeated that I had been authorised to make a reassuring statement, but that I had been instructed to accompany it with a warning stated in concise but serious terms. I had given His Excellency my personal commentary. I felt, I said, that in using language of extreme frankness, and even severity, I was rendering a service to the cause which everyone had at heart, namely, the conclusion of a speedy and satisfactory peace. I had every hope that we should not now have long to wait, but an interval must elapse, and the nature of the final conditions might be very much affected by what happened in that interval.

14. I have not thought it necessary to reproduce the replies made by the Minister to the various portions of my statement. He used all the arguments with which the Porte has familiarised the Allied representatives for months past, including the injustice of the occupation of Smyrna, the iniquity of the Greek action which followed it, and the responsibility of the French themselves for recent trouble in Cilicia. The most interesting feature of what he said was the extreme emphasis with which he insisted that even now the Government was something very distinct from the National Movement.

15. As I reported in my telegram No. 152 of the 21st February,⁸ I informed my French and Italian colleagues on the same day on which I saw the Minister for [Foreign] Affairs of the contents of Your Lordship's telegram and of what I had said to the Minister. I found that neither of them had had instructions to make any statement regarding the decisions of the Conference regarding Constantinople. This creates a little difficulty in regard to the question which I am now considering, *viz.*: what, if any, public announcement should be based on your telegram in order to bring its contents to the knowledge of the general Turkish public. The Porte have refrained from making any announcement, probably from a disinclination to publish the reservation regarding massacres and attacks on Allied troops. In the meanwhile I am letting the substance of the telegram become widely known by word of mouth.

I have, &c.

J. M. DE ROBECK,
High Commissioner

⁸ See Vol. VII, No. 45, n. 24.

No. 7

Letter from Earl Curzon to M. Venizelos¹

[E 143/106/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 24, 1920*

I have received information to the effect that in view of the anxiety felt by the Greek forces in the Smyrna sector authorisation is being sought by General Miliotes Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army, Smyrna, in certain contingencies to advance against the Turkish forces.

I further understand that General Pareskavopoulos [Paraskevopoulos] Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army has approached General Milne on the same subject.²

You will I am sure readily understand that His Majesty's Government would deprecate any unnecessary movement of the nature indicated and that any unauthorized advance on the part of the Greek forces might be very prejudicial to Greek aspirations under the Peace Treaty.

I may add that I have addressed a similar warning to the Turkish Government with regard to their position and movements.³

In these conditions I am confident that you will do your utmost to maintain the military *status quo* until the deliberations of the Peace Conference have borne fruit and that you will impress on the Greek General Command the necessity for exercising the greatest restraint. Should circumstances arise that would appear absolutely to necessitate any offensive defensive action representations on the subject addressed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army Smyrna to General Milne will of course receive prompt consideration.

¹ See No. 5, n. 2. The form of address and signature are missing on the filed copy of this letter.

² Cf. No. 5 above.

³ Ibid.

No. 8

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 161 Telegraphic [E 617/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 25, 1920, 9 p.m.*

In view of several incidents which have occurred in the past, it was decided to-day by the Supreme Council sitting in London that the High Commissioners of the Allied Powers at Constantinople should be instructed not to make any communication of Allied policy to the Turkish Government except in concert.¹

¹ See Vol. VII, No. 26, minute 2.

No. 9

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 181 Telegraphic [E 693/106/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 3, 1920, 6 p.m.*

My telegram No. 151.¹

Monsieur Venizelos assures me that His Majesty's Government may be confident that the military *status quo* at Smyrna will be maintained and no advance contemplated without General Milne's authority.²

¹ No. 5.

² This assurance had been given in a letter from M. Venizelos to Lord Curzon dated Feb. 25.

No. 10

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received March 7, 9.40 a.m.)

*No. 191 Telegraphic [E 1093/3/44]**

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 5, 1920, 6.45 p.m.*

My telegram No. 183 of 2nd March.¹

Allied High Commissioners met on 3rd March and again on 4th March. We are agreed in considering: (1) that events in Cilicia, however grave they may be, do not constitute true basis on which action of Allies here should be founded in immediate future; (2) that action in Constantinople of kind contemplated by Supreme Council² would act merely as irritant and not as deterrent to Turks really responsible for any massacre which may have taken place as accompaniment of this conflict between French and Nationalists; and (3) that naval action on coast of Cilicia would be unproductive of results.

We discussed at great length general Turkish situation as it exists to-day, and as it may be expected to develop, having regard to apparent intention of conference to formulate drastic terms of peace. We agree in anticipating violent resistance to such terms. Beyond this point agreement was impossible, and we had to renounce intention of addressing identical reply to Supreme Council. My French colleague and I argued (1) that armed resistance would be opposed to drastic peace terms by all sections of present Nationalist movement and portions of Moslem population swayed by it; (2) that this resistance would be attended by grave danger to Christians in interior; and (3) that if Allies are determined to impose drastic peace, they ought to forestall and so diminish resistance by fortifying their position at once in only place possible, namely, Constantinople. We considered that this could best be achieved by converting present position of Allies here into definite

¹ Printed in Vol. VII, No. 50, n. 7.

² i.e. the occupation of the 'War Office or some important Government building' and the securing and placing in temporary confinement of 'the persons of the Grand Vizier and the Minister of War, or of such Ministers as are primarily responsible'. See Vol. VII, Appendix to No. 38.

occupation and amongst other measures taking strong action against Nationalist leaders. At first meeting, Italian High Commissioner listened to these arguments without demur. At second meeting, he refused flatly to associate himself with proposal to recommend occupation of Constantinople. He maintained that such action would be calculated to precipitate the very consequences (especially massacre of Christians) which French High Commissioner and I considered likely to ensue at later stage from announcement of drastic peace terms, and which we wished to avoid. He refused to admit our argument that moral and material effect on national movement of strong action taken here now would hamper the efficiency of movement, though it would not by any means stifle it, and would reduce danger of massacre, which, on hypothesis of drastic peace, must be incurred sooner or later.

When asked for positive suggestions, in view of obvious desire of Supreme Council for leading from High Commissioner[s] as regards action called for, not merely by Cilician situation, but by situation in Turkey generally, Italian High Commissioner declined to commit himself. He appeared to cling to the hope that Conference might alleviate peace terms, even after first presenting them to Turks, sufficiently to make them acceptable to many adherents and some leaders of national movement. He suggested at one moment that it might be advisable to summon Turkish delegates to Paris, not to receive cut-and-dried treaty, but, in appearance at least, to treat with them. My French colleague and I expressed belief that Supreme Council would not consent to treat Turkey differently from other defeated enemies, or to modify essential features of treaty once they had presented it to Turks. We recognised that if drastic peace is to be imposed, future teems with difficulties, and is fraught with possible danger for Christians in the interior, but we persisted in belief that least evil course would be to forestall Nationalists by taking strong positive action on lines indicated above, accompanied by categorical announcement that even occupation of Constantinople did not prejudice fate of city, and that future would still depend on the conduct of Turks pending signature of treaty. It was agreed that each High Commissioner should report separately. French High Commissioner will base his report on draft of identic telegram, which he prepared between first and second meeting. He has promised me copy. I will telegraph further on receipt of it.³

³ See No. 14 below.

No. 11

The Earl of Derby¹ (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received March 5, 11.15 p.m.)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [Confidential/General/363/20]

Most secret and personal

PARIS, March 5, 1920, 7.5 p.m.

Have seen Paléologue² unofficially. The French Government is very much disturbed at action proposed to be taken in Constantinople.³ Though

¹ H.M. Ambassador at Paris.

² Secretary-General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³ See No. 10 above, n. 2.

prepared for joint action they fear consequences throughout rest of Turkey. They anticipate massacres of Christians in many places and view with alarm the prospect of war of which nobody can know the extent or anticipate the end.

Am writing you to-night on the subject.⁴

⁴ This letter has not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

No. 12

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 7, 10.30 a.m.)

*No. 192 Telegraphic [E 1094/3/44]**

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 5, 1920, 7.45 p.m.

My telegram No. 191 of 5th March.¹

Situation is complicated by resignation of Turkish Cabinet.²

See my telegram No. 188 of 5th March.³ Cabinet had not been in contact with Chamber since 9th February, when it received practically unanimous vote of confidence. Crisis is result of increasing evidence of impossibility of satisfying both Nationalists and Allies. No single immediate cause can be assigned for it, though news from Cilicia and insistence of High Commissioners on demand for surrender of equivalent of arms recently raided by Nationalists near Gallipoli⁴ doubtless produced weakening effect.

There is great difficulty in settling on new Government. Tewfik Pasha⁵ has been asked to form it, and has refused. Izzet Pasha,⁶ whose selection would mean a Government of definitely Nationalist complexion, is much spoken of. Probabilities (5th March) are, however, that choice will fall on some inconspicuous person considered 'safe' by France, like Salih Pasha, hitherto Minister of Marine.

¹ No. 10.

² This had taken place on the evening of March 3.

³ Not printed.

⁴ See No. 6, para. 9.

⁵ Grand Vizier, Nov. 1918–March 1919.

⁶ Grand Vizier, Oct.–Nov. 1918.

No. 13

Letter from Earl Curzon to the French Ambassador

[E 1103/1103/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 5, 1920

My dear Ambassador,

Your Excellency will remember that, at a recent Meeting of the Supreme Council in Downing Street, M. Millerand¹ asked me to supply him with details of the allegation that, on more than one occasion, high officials of the French Government at Constantinople had acted in a manner which suggested to the Turk that the French Government was pursuing a policy in the

¹ President of the French Council of Ministers. For this meeting of Feb. 25 see Vol. VII, No. 26.

Near East independently of the Allies and (in three of the cases quoted) inspired by a special friendliness for Turkish interests. I have the honour to append a statement on the subject, which has been drawn up in the Foreign Office.

I may also add that authoritative information has reached me that an active propaganda is being conducted in Palestine against the Zionist cause and in favour of Syrian unity, which receives marked encouragement from the French, and with which the French representative in Jerusalem displays a more than passive sympathy.²

It seems to me very unfortunate that such indications of discord should be manifest at a time when we are working so cordially together in London in the common interest.

Believe me,
My dear Ambassador,
Yours very sincerely
CURZON OF KEDLESTON

² See No. 212 below.

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 13

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 5, 1920*

(1) *The Turkish Peace Delegation*

On June 1st, 1919, Monsieur Clemenceau,³ on behalf of the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers, addressed a telegram to the French High Commissioner at Constantinople in the sense that the Ottoman Government were to be informed that the Supreme Council were prepared to accede to their request to be allowed to send a Delegation to Paris, and had instructed their Representatives to make the necessary arrangements for the safe conduct of the Turkish Delegates.

This communication was to be made jointly by all the High Commissioners in the name of the Supreme Council. Nevertheless Monsieur DeFrance,⁴ without previous consultation with his colleagues, delivered the communication alone and personally to the Grand Vizier in such a manner as to make it appear that it was mainly, if not solely, to France that thanks were due for the decision. He also took advantage of his visit alone to the Grand Vizier to offer to convey him to France in a French man-of-war. Further, in spite of the protest of his British colleague, Monsieur DeFrance gave immediate publicity through the press to the decision of the Supreme Council, prefaced by the words 'à la suite de la démarche faite par lui', i.e. by the French High Commissioner. Admiral Calthorpe,⁵ through the British Delegate on the Censorship Bureau, asked for these words to be deleted, but the French Delegate, after applying for instructions, insisted on their retention.

Commenting on the public announcement, the organ of the French High

³ President of the French Council of Ministers, Nov. 1917-Jan. 1920.

⁴ French High Commissioner at Constantinople.

⁵ British High Commissioner at Constantinople Nov. 1918-Aug. 1919.

Commissioner said: 'We, who have so often emphasised old relations of friendship between France and Turkey as well as their community of interests, feel great pleasure in announcing the news. It is not without a certain sense of pride that we point out that, at a time when Turkey is in the greatest misfortune, the helping hand of that nation whose generous sentiments have never failed to be manifested has been extended towards her. Be of good cheer, for France cannot betray her traditions'.

This was the prelude to a flood of propaganda, conducted openly by the French High Commissioner with all the means at his disposal, with the apparent object of enhancing French prestige in the eyes of the Turks, whilst diminishing that of Great Britain.

(2) *Telegram to the Turkish Heir Apparent*

The above incident was followed by the publication in the Constantinople press on June 4th of the following reply from the President of the French Republic to the telegram addressed by the Turkish Heir Apparent to the Heads of the principal Allied States:—

'The President of the Republic begs you to convey to His Highness the Crown Prince his thanks for the telegram sent through you. You doubtless will not fail to communicate to His Highness the reassurance that France, faithful to its traditions, will neglect nothing of that which affects the vital interests of Turkey.

PICHON.⁶

The position of the Turkish Heir Apparent was in no way different from that of the German Crown Prince, and a similar telegram addressed to His Majesty King George was not replied to. The action of the French Government in sending so conciliatory a reply, without consultation with their Allies, could scarcely have been dictated by any other motive than that of marking a distinction between the sentiments and attitudes of the two Governments.

(3) *The Military Command at Constantinople*

By a decision reached in London on the 3rd December 1918, 'the British, French, and Italian Governments agreed that, while the British troops garrisoning any part of European Turkey and the General in Command of them should remain under General Franchet d'Esperey, the rest of General Milne's army might be transferred to the Caucasus and elsewhere, and in that case should cease to be under the command of General Franchet d'Esperey. The transfer should be agreed to in each case by the Government concerned.'

On the 8th February 1919, General Franchet d'Esperey moved his headquarters to Constantinople, and is alleged to have consistently taken advantage of his position to interfere in the details of the local British command in a manner calculated to mortify and humiliate the British Commanders, and

⁶ French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nov. 1917-Jan. 1920.

to impair the effectiveness at a moment of crisis of the forces under British command.

About the middle of August 1919, General Franchet d'Esperey endeavoured to induce General Milne to dissipate his forces by sending a detachment to Adrianople to replace Italian troops which had been withdrawn, presumably with General Franchet d'Esperey's permission.

On the 28th October 1919, General Milne reported that General Franchet d'Esperey had removed the 122nd French Division from the Allied Corps under the executive command of Lieutenant-General Sir H. Wilson, and had placed it under his own hand as a reserve, thus leaving only six French battalions under the command of the Allied Corps at Constantinople. Interference of this nature culminated on the 18th January 1920, in a letter from General Franchet d'Esperey to General Milne with detailed instructions to the two French battalions, which then remained with the Allied Corps, restricting them to certain duties and thus virtually removing them from the control of the Corps Commander. At the same time it came to the knowledge of General Milne that General Franchet d'Esperey had issued instructions, without reference to him, that the French troops in Constantinople were to be employed in any crisis only under General Franchet's own immediate command.

All these measures were taken without reference to General Milne or General Wilson. They are incidents in what appears to have been a settled policy conceived not on military grounds but with the object of so reducing the number of troops under British command at Constantinople as to render it inevitable that, should military intervention be required at a moment of crisis, it could only be undertaken by the French Commander himself.

(4) *Publication of Supreme Council's decision in regard to Constantinople*⁷

Information has been received in London to the effect that a telegram, purporting to emanate from General Franchet d'Esperey, was published in the Turkish newspapers 'Peyam' and 'Sabah' on the 18th February, stating that the Supreme Council had 'adopted the French point of view' and had decided to allow the Turks to remain in Constantinople.⁸ The French High Commissioner denied all knowledge of this telegram but no information has yet reached us that it was also denied by General Franchet d'Esperey.

⁷ See No. 3.

⁸ See Vol. VII, No. 26, minute 2.

No. 14

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 8, 10.15 a.m.)*

*No. 201 Telegraphic [E 1125/3/44]**

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 7, 1920, 9 p.m.

My telegram No. 191 of 5th March.¹

French High Commissioner's draft of identic telegram originally proposed

¹ No. 10.

is now before me. It has, I understand, served as basis for telegram addressed by French High Commissioner to Paris as expression of his own views. Draft sets out at length reasons, on which all High Commissioners are agreed, for considering action on lines suggested by Supreme Council neither opportune nor likely to be effective. It emphasises lack of official confirmation of news of massacres in true sense of the word (? Turks' massacres in Cilicia). It further points out injustice, apart from futility, of arresting late Ministers, and especially Grand Vizier, whose only fault was powerlessness to control Nationalists, and who has now resigned.

Draft proceeds to sum up general situation, and reiterates conviction frequently expressed by all three High Commissioners that drastic peace can only be imposed by force. It notes that, contrary to expectation, which appeared to be justified some weeks ago, Conference seems to be moving now in direction of a peace which will deprive Turks of Smyrna, Adrianople and Erzeroum, and leave Sultan in Constantinople with personal guard only. Treaty of this kind will meet with violent resistance, and High Commissioners have to envisage a situation in the near future even graver than that of to-day.

Can Allies face that situation and impose their will in whole of Turkey?

Answer depends on measures which Allied Governments are prepared to take, but enforcement will be difficult, and preparations should be made without loss of time. If Allies cannot be strong everywhere they should at least be strong at important points, and first and most necessary steps should be to strengthen their position in Constantinople by adoption of measures more severe and more efficacious than those contemplated by Supreme Council with the limited object of bringing home to Turkish Government responsibility for massacres. Primarily steps should be to convert present status of Allies here into effective occupation, carrying with it control of public departments, police, gendarmerie, telegraphs, posts, &c., not the arrest of impotent Ministers, but of Nationalist leaders and dangerous members of C.U.P.,² perhaps also closing of Chamber. This action would be based on following grounds, which would be explained to public in proclamation: Violations of armistice and disobedience to instructions given under it; hostile attitude and attacks by Nationalists; fomentation of disorder and massacres of Christians; powerlessness of Government to enforce its authority; obligations of Allies to guarantee security of Sultan, Government, Allied forces and population generally. Proclamation would include declaration that measures taken did not prejudice future of Constantinople, which still remained for Conference to settle.

Draft recognises that action suggested might have serious consequences and carry Allies very far. Formation of Government might be [? im]possible, officials might go on strike, and attitude of Sultan, Parliament and population generally would be uncertain. Christians in Asia Minor might be exposed to danger from explosion of Nationalist anger. All these possible consequences

² i.e. the Committee of Union and Progress, the organ of the Young Turk movement, which had pursued the national revival of Turkey during the years preceding the First World War.

have to be considered beforehand, together with means of dealing with them: military and naval reinforcements; supply of officials for essential services; expenditure on such services, including payment of salaries; measures necessary for repression of possible, though not probable, popular rising.

Draft concludes by saying that, in spite of all this, it is the duty of High Commissioners to submit above suggestions and considerations with request for early instructions, and by pointing out urgency of matter, as action might have to be taken at any moment, and might more easily be taken in anticipation of, rather than simultaneously with, announcement of peace terms.

No. 15

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 9)¹

No. 204 Telegraphic [E 1189/3/44]

Clear the line

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 8, 1920¹

Your telegram No. 187.²

French High Commissioner and I have agreed on following preliminary reply as result of exchange of views following on conversation between General Milne and myself this morning:—

Three High Commissioners will meet to-morrow morning, and Military and Naval Commanders-in-chief will be requested to make necessary preparations.

M. de France [*sic*] and I desire to observe straight away that telegram under reference crossed those sent by us to our Governments on March 5th³ in which we set out measures required in our opinion for effective action, possible consequences of such measures, necessity which may confront us of taking over administration of city and reasons for which Italian High Commissioner considered himself unable to join with us.

Military dispositions required will take only a few days. We therefore beg our Governments to inform us urgently and after perusal of our telegrams up to date whether Supreme Council maintains its instructions or whether we are to await further orders before finally proceeding.

General Milne's instructions from the War Office are such as will enable him to proceed with preparations and actual occupation on being requested to do so by High Commissioners.

In view of great secrecy hitherto observed (very desirable in my opinion) it is disconcerting to read in the American wireless circulated here today quotations from 'Écho de Paris' and 'Daily Telegraph' giving substantially accurate account of immediate intention of Allies. This disclosure may considerably affect march of events here.

¹ The times of receipt and despatch are not recorded.

² Of March 6. A draft of this telegram, which varied only very slightly from the text as despatched, is printed in Vol. VII, No. 50, Appendix.

³ See Nos. 10 and 14.

No. 16

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 197 Telegraphic [E 1093/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 9, 1920, 1.40 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 191 of 5th March.¹

We are considering suggestions contained in French High Commissioner's draft,² but in the meantime we presume that you have already acted upon instructions contained in our telegram No. 187.³ Please telegraph at once what steps have been taken.⁴

¹ No. 10.

² See No. 14.

³ See No. 15, n. 2.

⁴ For mention of the foregoing telegram and a discussion on March 10 at the London Conference on the action to be taken at Constantinople, see Vol. VII, No. 55, minute 1.

No. 17

Letter from Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon¹

[E 2291/56/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 9, 1920*

My dear Lord Curzon,

The Foreign Office telegram of the 6th March containing the basis of the peace with Turkey decided upon by the Supreme Council² has, I confess, come somewhat as a surprise. With two of the proposed terms, namely, the internationalisation of the Straits and the imposition of a close financial control on Turkey, I am in entire agreement. But the proposed cession to Greece of all Thrace up to the Chatalja lines and of Smyrna (which is hardly mitigated by the retention of a nominal and probably valueless Turkish suzerainty) fills me with grave misgivings.

I have always maintained that the class which is responsible for having brought Turkey into the war, and for the hideous massacres which took place during the war, should receive drastic punishment. It is eminently right and proper that Turkey should forfeit control of the Straits, should lose all non-Ottoman provinces, should have her military element reduced to impotence, and should in general be disrated from the position of a Great Power. But I feel equally strongly that the terms to be imposed on Turkey should—

- (a) Not be incompatible with the principles for which we are supposed to have gone to war;
- (b) Should pave the way for a lasting peace in the Near East;
- (c) Should be feasible of application without further bloodshed and sacrifices on the part of the Allies.

¹ The date of receipt is not recorded, but this 'frank but exceedingly important' letter, as Lord Curzon called it, was forwarded for circulation to the Cabinet under cover of a note dated March 26. It is referred to as 'a Despatch' in the Earl of Ronaldshay's *The Life of Lord Curzon*, vol. iii (London, s.d.), p. 272.

² See No. 15, n. 2.

These views are shared by my advisers here, men for the most part with life-long experience of Near Eastern affairs.

If we apply these three tests to the proposed cession of Smyrna and Thrace to Greece, what do we find? As regards (a) it means that we are placing territories overwhelmingly Turkish in population under the rule of the Turks' secular enemies, under whose rule previous experience in Thessaly, Crete and Macedonia has shown that it is almost impossible for Mussulmans to exist—a flagrant violation of the principle of self-determination, to which I was under the impression that the Supreme Council had given its adherence. As regards (b), it is unthinkable, as the Foreign Office has consistently been informed by us here, that the Mussulmans in those areas will peacefully accept Greek annexation, especially after the sample of Greek methods which they have had since the Greek occupation of Smyrna. This is made clear enough by the report of the Inter-Allied Commission on the Smyrna atrocities,³ but clearer still by the very existence of the nationalist movement in Asia Minor. If the provisional Greek occupation of Smyrna has been, as it undoubtedly has, the canker in the Near Eastern situation since last May, how much more so will definite annexation be the canker for years to come, the constant irritant which will perpetuate bloodshed in Asia Minor probably for generations? The position of Thrace is analogous, but there is this further consideration, that the notification of its annexation to Greece, or at least the first approach of a Greek force, will almost certainly be the signal for a stampede of the non-combatant Mussulman population.

Those of us who have now been grappling with the problem of housing a few thousand refugees from Southern Russia⁴ cannot but be appalled at the prospect of being faced in the near future with the problem of accommodating and feeding tens of thousands of panic-stricken 'muhadjirs',⁵ especially when we consider that one of the first results of nationalist opposition to our terms will be to cut us off from one of our principal and nearest sources of supply.

As regards (c), it appears from the Foreign Office telegram that the Supreme Council realise that the terms they propose must needs be imposed by force. They are quite right. The terms are such that no Turk, Committee of Union and Progress or pro-*Entente* can very well accept. The Supreme Council, thus, are prepared for a resumption of general warfare; they are prepared to do violence to their own declared and cherished principles; they are prepared to perpetuate bloodshed indefinitely in the Near East; and for what? To maintain M. Veniselos in power in Greece for what cannot in the nature of things be more than a few years at the outside. I cannot help wondering if the game is worth the candle. I should wonder, even if M. Veniselos were immortal; he is not immortal, but ephemeral, and he is not only ephemeral, but as regards Greece, a phenomenon. By that I mean that he has no successors of his own calibre. In other words, he is not Greece. He is not, strictly speaking, even Greek. M. Veniselos's deserts *vis-à-vis* the *Entente* are great; but is it wise to run the almost certain risk of plunging Asia

³ This report is printed in Vol. II, Appendix A to No. 17.

⁴ See Vol. XII, Chap. V, Nos. 663-4.

⁵ i.e. non-Turkish Muslims.

in blood in order to reward Greece according to the deserts of M. Veniselos, which are very different from the deserts of Greece?

I confess I am amazed at the apparent light-heartedness with which the Supreme Council seem to contemplate another war, and with the apparent readiness of our Government to provide its quota of men for the purpose. Recently, when it was a question of reoccupying Baku and of defending our Indian marches, and eastern Empire generally, against imminent Bolshevik menace, the project, one of possibly vital importance to the British Empire, had to be 'reluctantly abandoned' because the requisite troops could not be found.⁶ But when it is a question, not of protecting the Empire, but of gratifying the excessive demands of M. Veniselos, these difficulties apparently vanish. This inconsistency may not be obvious to the British public, but I think it would be to Allied officers and men out here, who will hardly appreciate being called upon to sacrifice themselves in order to join Greeks in killing Turks.

The British people have been stirred, very rightly, by the recent massacre of between 10,000 and 15,000 Armenians in Cilicia.⁷ But at the same time they seem to be contemplating with equanimity the entering into relations with the Bolsheviks—men who have instigated the killing, flaying alive, and otherwise torturing of probably hundreds of thousands of their own kith and kin. Perhaps they do not realise that the proposal to dismember Ottoman provinces of Turkey in the interests of Greece will drive the remaining Turks into the arms of the Bolsheviks, will set the Near East and Central Asia aflame, and will intensify the menace of Bolshevism to the British Moslem world.

If the recent stiffening of the Supreme Council as regards Turkish terms is due to the late events in Cilicia, I would say that it seems unsound policy to base what is presumably intended to be a permanent settlement on an incident, the more so when the fundamental responsibility for the incident is as yet far from established.

If, on the other hand, it is due to the thunder of the Canons of Canterbury, to the outcry of Near Eastern cranks, and to the ingenious enthusiasm of Dr. Burrows⁸ and his friends, it seems to me even less defensible.

It seems difficult to reconcile this undue severity towards the Turks, who are believed to be weak, with the undue leniency to the far more unspeakable Bolsheviks, who appear to be strong.

You will, I trust, excuse the length of this letter, but it is written with a strong feeling that we are not acting quite with fairness and justification. Our good name is at stake, and honesty of dealing is probably the greatest asset we have in the Near East.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,
J. M. DE ROBECK

⁶ See Vol. XII, No. 518, n. 1.

⁷ Cf. No. 2 above, n. 3.

⁸ Dr. R. M. Burrows, one of the founders of the Anglo-Hellenic League; see *The Times*, May 17, p. 16.

Note from Mr. Kerr¹ to Mr. Campbell²

[E 1371/106/44]

LONDON, March 9, 1920

Dear Campbell,

I enclose for your information a note of an interview which I had with M. Venizelos yesterday.

Yours sincerely,
P. H. KERR

¹ Mr. Philip Kerr, Private Secretary to Mr. Lloyd George.

² Mr. R. H. Campbell, Private Secretary to Lord Curzon.

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 18

March 8, 1920

M. Venizelos asked me to go and see him in regard to the enforcement of the Treaty on Turkey. He said that he was very anxious that the British Government should know that in his deliberate judgment the contention that Mustapha Kemal commanded any kind of formidable force was pure bluff. He could not understand the French attitude and especially M. Cambon's statement that the British Government seemed to be contemplating a great war against Turkey.³ At one time Turkey enjoyed a great prestige in the Balkans. After it had been smashed Turkey never recovered so far as Europe was concerned. Similarly with Asia, he believed that Turkey as an international power had really been finally smashed.

He said that he made this statement with the full sense of responsibility of one who was prepared to back his opinion by acts. If France and Italy were reluctant to commit themselves to imposing peace on Turkey by force, Greece was willing to undertake the task with the co-operation of the British troops now in Constantinople.

He said that he considered the fact that Mustapha Kemal had been unable to concentrate troops opposite the Greek lines at Smyrna was a proof that he did not command any extensive force. He M. Venizelos had moved six divisions to that area simply because he wanted to be strong there and because he was unable to attack his assailants. The Turks were always attacking his lines and if he was allowed to hit back he believed he could smash their concentration with one or two divisions. As it was he had to stand on the defensive along his whole line while the Turks could pick and choose their time and place of attack. He was sure that nine-tenths of the effective Turkish troops were now concentrated against the Greeks at Smyrna and that if the Greeks advanced they would be swept aside.

Finally, he said that provided the Allies or the British occupied Constanti-

³ This remark had been made by M. Paul Cambon, French Ambassador in London, at a meeting of the London Conference on March 5 which M. Venizelos had attended; see Vol. VII, No. 50 (p. 417).

nople, Scutari (the terminus of the railway opposite Constantinople) and Panderma (the terminus of the railway on the Sea of Marmora) the Greeks could advance to Afum Kara Hissar which would give the Allies command of the whole railway system of Anatolia and compel the Turkish Government to sign the Peace.

I said that I thought the principal difficulty would arise not in the West but in the East. How were we to prevent by this means Mustapha massacring Armenians? M. Venizelos replied that he thought that if we armed the Armenians properly they would be able to hold their own easily against anything that Mustapha could bring against them.

No. 19

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 10, 7.45 p.m.)

No. 210 Telegraphic [E 1296/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 10, 1920, 2.55 p.m.

My telegram No. 104.¹

High Commissioners met on March 9th.

I have previously seen General Milne. In view of publicity already given to decision to occupy Constantinople he was of opinion still more that all idea of sudden *coup* must be abandoned, and that occupation had better be preceded by invitation to Grand Vizier and Minister of War to wait on High Commissioners and Commanders in Chief some hours before occupation. They would be informed (? at) this interview of decision of Supreme Council regarding occupation and invitation to facilitate its execution in orderly fashion. I communicated this opinion to my Colleagues. We discussed whole (? matter) in all its (? bearing)s, but the most (? questionable) were left for final settlement until after meeting of Naval and Military Commanders which General Milne had proposed to hold on March 10th.

It was decided on principle to proceed with all arrangements for (? about) six months' occupation. I undertook to draft instructions in general terms to be issued by the three High Commissioners to Commanders in Chief. Italian Colleague made reservation that he must withhold actual signature until he received direct instructions from his Government, from whom he had nothing so far.

As regards date of occupation I told Colleagues that General Milne was in favour of March 13th. They were inclined to think this somewhat too soon. Both would like to have quite definite instructions from their Government and I think that French (? Colleague) is reluctant to commit himself too far pending arrival of General Franchet who might he thought arrive on March 11th.

General Milne and I are anxious to carry matter through as soon as possible.

¹ In the Foreign Office it was suggested that the number should be '204', i.e. No. 15 above.

I hope to get (? Colleagues) into line after meeting of Allied Naval and Military Commanders.

Meanwhile High Commissioners agreed with French High Commissioners [*sic*] to address identic telegram to our Governments regarding possible consequences of decision to impose peace terms now contemplated. See my telegram immediately following.²

² For a discussion of Admiral de Robeck's telegram No. 211 of March 10, here referred to, and a paraphrase of it, see Vol. VII, No. 60, minute 2 and Appendix 3; see also No. 23, Part II (2) below. In minutes on E 1297/3/44 Lords Hardinge and Curzon wrote as follows:

'... I doubt if the Greeks realise what it is going to cost them to hold Thrace and Smyrna. The Turks will never agree to the handing over of Adrianople and Smyrna to the Greeks whom they hate and despise. This is not my personal view only, but I believe it to be the view of all who have lived any time in Constantinople and know both the Turks and the Greeks. However this is a question for the Supreme Council to decide. H.'

'I share these apprehensions but M. Venizelos is serene in his confidence and his inexhaustible eloquence leaves no chink for a reply. C. 11/3.'

No. 20

Earl Curzon to Mr. Lindsay¹ (Washington)

*No. 269 Telegraphic [E 1607/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 12, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Following for your own information:—

Prior to the reassembly of the Peace Conference in London,² I asked the American Ambassador whether his Government desired to be represented; he replied negatively, but added that he would be glad to receive any information I might be able to give him during the Conference.³ I therefore invited Mr. Davis to call on 6th March.

I explained to him the events precedent to the handing over of Cilicia and Syria to the French, and the latter's military difficulties, culminating in the recent serious events at Marash and elsewhere.

The Americans were directly concerned in this situation owing to their philanthropic activities in those regions. Two American citizens had been murdered⁴ and others compelled to evacuate Marash with the French, leaving the schools unprotected. It was well-nigh impossible to determine the exact degree of responsibility of the Turkish Government for these atrocities, but their relations with Mustapha Kemal were so intimate that they could not possibly be acquitted.

The matter had been carefully considered by the Peace Conference, both locally with regard to Cilicia and in its broader aspect with regard to measures to be taken at Constantinople. With regard to the first, the French had assumed responsibility for the restoration of order, and I understood that

¹ Counsellor in H.M. Embassy at Washington, acting as Chargé d'Affaires.

² i.e. the First Conference of London which met from Feb. 12 to April 10, 1920; see Vol. VII.

³ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 51, minute 2.

⁴ See Vol. IV, No. 424.

they were about to reoccupy Marash. The question of a naval demonstration off Cilicia had also been considered, but, while the French had sent vessels, the Allied authorities in Constantinople decided that the British fleet would be more useful near the capital.

With regard to the second, the Allies were unanimous that only the most drastic action would meet the case, and the Allied High Commissioners in Constantinople had been asked for suggestions. Simultaneously a telegram was received on 29th February from the British High Commissioner, in which, without reference to the Cilician massacres, he emphasised the critical position at Constantinople and the necessity of prompt and decisive action.⁵ He and his colleagues were consistently confronted with evasion or defiance. The Nationalist leaders were determined to resist drastic peace terms. In these circumstances the High Commissioners concluded that preparations should be made for effective action by the occupation of Constantinople and other military measures. Such a decision was, however, dependent on the intentions of the Peace Conference. Were the terms to be lenient, i.e., were the Turks to be left Smyrna and Eastern Thrace, with Turkish suzerainty over a portion of Turkish Armenia, he suggested the policy of creating a moderate *bloc* round the Sultan to overcome the Nationalist extremists.

A few days later, and after the receipt of our telegram,⁶ the High Commissioner, after repeating these views, pointed out that the Cilician incident must be dealt with on its own merits; the Allies had to face the wider issue of Nationalist resistance to a drastic peace, and he reiterated his conviction that Allied occupation of Constantinople was inevitable.⁷ The Conference then despatched a further telegram to the Allied High Commissioners recognising the impracticability of the *bloc* policy failing a lenient peace, and expressing the view that Constantinople should be at once occupied by the Allied forces until the terms of the treaty had been carried out, that Mustapha Kemal should be dismissed and the Turkish Government informed that, in the event of any recurrence of outrages, the peace terms would be rendered even more severe and the concessions withdrawn. The High Commissioners were asked to confer as to these or other measures to secure the submission of the Turks and the protection of Christians.⁸

I explained that military occupation of Constantinople would include the occupation of the War Office and the control and censorship of its military orders and despatches, together with such other military measures as the Allied commanders might consider desirable, but not the assumption of civil administration.

I justified my exposition to Mr. Davis on the grounds, firstly, that the Americans were directly interested in the events in Cilicia; secondly, that,

⁵ This appears to be a reference to Constantinople telegram No. 176 of Feb. 29, received March 1 at 11.15 p.m., not printed. A paraphrase is printed in Vol. VII, Appendix 2 to No. 45.

⁶ i.e. Foreign Office telegram No. 176 of Feb. 28, not printed. It was identical in wording with the draft printed in Vol. VII, Appendix to No. 38.

⁷ See No. 10.

⁸ These instructions were sent to Admiral de Robeck in Foreign Office telegram No. 187 of March 6, not printed. See No. 15, n. 2.

though the American Government had desisted from the Conference and had given no intimation of their future policy with regard to Turkey, nevertheless there were many who refused to believe that American interest in Turkey had altogether abated, and who even thought that America might at a future date assume some share of the responsibility which it had once been hoped that she would voluntarily undertake; and thirdly that, though the Powers were resolved to take this action by themselves, they did not wish to take it without previously informing the American Government.

I added that it was not for me to formulate any request, still less any demand. His Government would decide on their own responsibility what action, if any, they would take. Even if they were willing to participate, geographical conditions might render this difficult or impossible, but I added that on our part we would gladly welcome their co-operation in an essentially international policy of which the consequences must be far-reaching.⁹

⁹ A summary of Lord Curzon's statement had been dictated by him on March 6 and transmitted to Mr. Davis who had acknowledged it on the 8th; cf. Vol. VII, No. 60, minute 2, p. 496.

No. 21

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 221 Telegraphic [E 1462/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 13, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 220.¹

My telegram No. 207 which was sent after meeting of Supreme Council on March 10 at which it was read out and unanimously approved, gave you and your colleagues full authority to act,² and we are at a loss to understand further delays.

Discussion as to nature of Peace Terms is about to take place at a further meeting of Supreme Council, but should not delay steps already authorised, which we agree with you in thinking are an entirely distinct question.

If your Allied colleagues are unable to act with you notwithstanding orders of Supreme Council, you should instruct General Milne to proceed on his own responsibility.

¹ Of March 12, not printed; see No. 22 below and No. 22, n. 2.

² See Vol. VII, No. 55, minute 1 and n. 4 for the draft of this telegram of March 10. The final text varied slightly from the draft: the second and third paragraphs read: 'It may be necessary, however, that the Allied Powers should occupy the Posts and Telegraphs, as well as the War Office, in order to prevent the issue of secret communications, and that they should also assume complete control of the police. The arrest of dangerous Nationalist leaders would be in accord with policy previously pursued.' An additional paragraph followed; this read: 'You have authority to act in all these respects.'

Letter from Earl Curzon to the French Ambassador

[E 1462/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 13, 1920

My dear Ambassador,

You will remember that at the meeting of the Supreme Council on Wednesday, March 10th, we agreed unanimously to the despatch of a telegram to our High Commissioners in Constantinople—which telegram was read out by me and approved by the Council—instructing them to carry out at once, if they had not already done so, the previous orders with regard to the Military Occupation of Constantinople with such additional guarantees, such as control of posts, telegraphs, police &c. as they might think desirable.¹

An hour ago I received a telegram from the British High Commissioner—*despatched yesterday*,² but evidently before our telegram of Wednesday had been received—saying that all preparations were complete for occupation on March 13th, i.e. to-day, when on the afternoon of the 11th, i.e. Thursday, the French High Commissioner produced a telegram from his Government saying that in a matter so grave the decision should only be taken after ripe reflection and that execution should be deferred until the proposals of the High Commissioners have been examined by the Governments.

Admiral de Robeck remarks that this action of the French High Commissioner will delay everything and postpone occupation for some days.

He points out the unfortunate consequences of such delay and urges with great force that the Military Occupation of Constantinople is quite a different thing from the nature of the Peace Terms (which M. Millerand is coming over to discuss at the beginning of next week).

No doubt since Admiral de Robeck despatched his telegram, our orders of Wednesday, i.e. the orders of the Supreme Council, have been received, and it may be presumed that action has already been, or is being taken, upon them, since I cannot conceive that the French Government would propose, without communication to us, to cancel instructions upon which we had jointly agreed.

Inasmuch, however, as further delay is dangerous and in order that there may be no doubt in the minds of the High Commissioners that our instructions of Wednesday were intended to be carried out, I am, after consultation with the Prime Minister, telegraphing to Admiral de Robeck, that he should proceed upon the instructions which he has already received from the Supreme Council, and that if the French or Italian Commanders decline, even in the face of these instructions, to co-operate with him, General Milne must act upon his own responsibility.³

I hasten at once to inform you of what has happened, feeling strongly that we should maintain unbroken the close co-operation and mutual confidence

¹ See No. 21, n. 2.

² Admiral de Robeck's No. 220; see No. 21, n. 1.

³ No. 21.

with which we have throughout been acting, and confident that in fact the orders of the Supreme Council will be as loyally carried out by the French as by the British authorities at Constantinople.⁴

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

⁴ In his reply, dated March 14, the French Ambassador stated that M. Millerand had instructed the French High Commissioner to act with his colleagues in carrying out the instructions of the Supreme Council, and added that the instructions referred to by Admiral de Robeck were probably earlier than the decision of March 10 of the Supreme Council.

No. 23

General Staff Memorandum on the situation in Turkey¹

[E 2207/3/44]

Secret

WAR OFFICE, *March 15, 1920*

PART I—INFORMATION

I. GENERAL FACTORS

(a) **POLITICAL.**—Political power has passed to the Nationalists. Despite sporadic opposition owing to requisitions and the fact that their forces are nominally controlled and administered from Constantinople, the Nationalist organization will soon be, if it is not already, sufficiently complete to function independently.

(b) **MORAL.**—The mass of the nation is absolutely war-weary. But the population would be prepared to fight bitterly to avoid parts of their territory or own landed property being handed over to a foreign power, especially to Greece or Armenia. It is doubtful, however, how many volunteers could be raised, say, in Aidin to fight in Erzerum or *vice versa*, i.e., resistance will probably be local, except in the case of regular troops.

(c) **MATERIAL FACTORS.**—

(i) *Personnel.*—The Turkish Regular forces would almost certainly place themselves at the disposal of the Nationalists.

(ii) *Material.*—The Regular forces are well armed, well fed, and in most cases—at least until recently—were regularly paid for the first time on record and fairly equipped. The supply of rifles and small-arm ammunition is sufficient to maintain both Regulars and Nationalists for 3 to 6 months. They are not well off for mobile artillery nor shells. But they have sufficient of these, mostly in the eastern districts, to enable them to operate against lightly equipped opponents.

(iii) *Communications.*—*The telegraph system* is very fair. Communications east and west are good, including the main Europe-Asia lines:—

¹ Two copies of this memorandum were forwarded to the Foreign Office by the War Office on March 25: a copy of Part I with maps attached had already been sent on March 19.

- (a) Along south of Black Sea.
- (b) Through Sivas and Diarbekr.
- (c) Through Konia and Aleppo.

Lines north and south are very few in number, especially in the central area.

Wireless.—The Turks only appear to have four sets—all light portable, with radius of not much more than 100 miles in this terrain. These have been recently located near—

Erzerum.

Van.

Kara Kilisseh.

Bayazid (believed to have moved to near Erzerum).

- (iv) *Transport.—Railways.*—The Angora Railway is run by Turkish personnel. The Anatolian and others to a considerable extent by Europeans. In the absence of Europeans a breakdown in engine power is almost inevitable. There is a serious shortage of spare parts. In the absence of English coal inferior coal brought from Eregli by sea is used. If this were stopped and wood were the only fuel available, engines would soon be brought to a standstill. However the Nationalists would not be dependent upon the railway in the ordinary military sense.

Mechanical transport is practically non-existent. Metalled roads are few and not in good repair.

Pack.—Great shortage of horses and mules.

(d) **MILITARY CONTROL AND ORGANIZATION.** (*See Appendix D.*)²—The Nationalist Organization is now sufficiently established to be able to exercise efficient control from Angora, Sivas or Erzerum. On the withdrawal of Allied troops from Konia, that too could be made available as a base. The occupation by the Allies of the War Office at Constantinople may therefore not have much effect from the point of view of military control. (*See paragraph 1 [? (a)] above.*)

(e) **EXTENT OF NATIONALIST MOVEMENT.**—This derives its strength from fear of permanent occupation by Christian powers, or where Armenian or European troops have been suspected of oppressive action; i.e., Smyrna, Thrace and Cilicia. Resistance will increase with the depth of the zone occupied.

(f) **NEIGHBOURING PEOPLES.—Arabs.**—The Arabs generally sympathise with their co-religionists, the Turks. The Damascus Government is in touch with the Nationalists, and the Arab Government officials are mostly in sympathy with pan-Islam. But it seems very unlikely that any large number of Arabs would take part in any operations outside their own country, even for an attack on Cilicia, Syria or the Euphrates. The Arabs' strategy will most probably take the form of synchronized and self-interested operations calculated to take advantage of any Turkish diversion.

² Not printed.

Kurds.—Feeling in Kurdistan is divided. There is no doubt that the Turks are intriguing with the Kurds. The latter may respect the Caliphate, but there is a strong party desiring an independent Kurdistan. Any decision tending to split Kurdistan between France and England might throw this party into the arms of the pro-Turk party. It is not considered, however, that the Kurds would be prepared to take action much outside their own areas, and in the main they are said to desire independence of the Turks.

Azerbaijan.—Has been flirting with the Soviet, and decidedly with the Turks. Though Shiah, the Tartars are co-religionist and, owing their independence from Russia in the first instance to Turkish assistance, they are favourable to Turkey. They are now, however, on good terms with Georgia, on whose good offices, for transit, &c., they are dependent. They appear to be making honest attempts at an understanding with Armenia, despite the chronic animosity between these peoples. *De facto* recognition by His Majesty's Government³ has done good, however, and if the proposed Allied support with equipment and arms is judiciously arranged, it is not considered that there is for the moment, much danger of Azerbaijan directly assisting the Turks. Thanks, however, to Armenian intransigence [*sic*] the Tartars may always be reckoned upon to provide a diversion calculated to hold the Erivan Armenian forces away from the Turks.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SENTIMENTAL

(a) The importance in the Moslem mind of the retention of Constantinople is not easy to determine. It must be remembered that over 200,000 of the Mohammedan population of Constantinople are not Turks.

It is certain that owing to propaganda or otherwise the question bulks large in India; and is a factor of some weight in Egypt where there is an important Turkish element among the notables. In Arabia, Afghanistan, Mesopotamia, Syria and Azerbaijan, it may be said to have little influence on the masses of the people, though the question will always be used as a political weapon when required by their leaders and spokesmen.

But in Anatolia and Kurdistan, where it might be expected to be of supreme importance, it seems doubtful if it is really vital. In short, it is useful as a rallying cry, as propaganda, and as a stalking-horse in foreign politics. But it is doubtful whether the presence of the Greek in Smyrna and the threatened creation of Armenia do not loom larger in the Turkish Nationalist eye, while the introduction of a Christian wedge into Cilicia, threatening to sever Turk from Arab, has had immediate local results.

(b) Another fundamental matter [i]s the great change which has been influencing the nature of popular movements in Asia during the last 15 years, owing to the success of Japan. In the past it has always been religion that has moved the East. Now, with the improvement of communications and greater frequency of intercourse, familiarity with Europeans and their methods has inevitably bred contempt, or, at least, a practical perspective.

³ *De facto* recognition had been accorded by the principal Allied Powers to the Governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan on Jan. 10, 1920; see Vol. II, No. 65, minute 5.

Whether the Easterner believes more in himself or less in the European, it would appear that the dominating factor of the future is nationality. The international agitator is quick to manipulate this factor, as is seen in Egypt, where Copt and Muslims vie in vehemence; in India, where Hindu shows an inclination to common cause with Mohammedan: in Palestine, where anti-Zionists work to combine Christian and Arab against the Jew.

The Arab rising was Nationalist, not religious, and was, indeed, directed against the Caliph's forces. The Young Turk revolution of 1908 and the Persian movement of 1906 were Nationalist.

The present movement in Turkey is definitely Nationalist and not religious. Though the weight of religious and quasi-religious factors will decrease and the weight of territorial considerations will increase in proportion to the strength of Nationalism, yet religion will always be the instrument of Nationalism.

Thus, Turkish Nationalists have not yet abandoned their position in Thrace, for which purpose they make play with the religious associations of Adrianople. The manipulation of the Caliphate question calls for no comment here.

3. CHARACTERISTICS

The Turk is an excellent fighter individually, especially on the defensive. The regular troops are well officered and sufficiently well organized to be mobile and self-supporting.

The Nationalist bands are men with rifles, some ammunition and no transport, though their personal mobility is said to be remarkable. They are believed mainly to comprise men who have registered their names and then returned to their homes. Their activities are therefore limited practically by the distance away from their own homes that they can be fed. They have machine-guns and some artillery.

4. POSSIBLE COURSES OPEN TO NATIONALISTS AND FORCES AVAILABLE

These will be considered together as, owing to factors given above (localization of Nationalist bands, lack of communications, financial difficulties, &c.) the force[s] available vary with the course proposed.

- (a) Attack on Greek population in Thrace, possibly accompanied by outbreaks in Constantinople.
- (b) Attack Greeks in Smyrna area.
- (c) Attack French in Cilicia.
- (d) Attack Armenia.
- (e) Attack Mesopotamia.
- (f) General defensive and waiting game, meanwhile harrassing [*sic*] by guerilla methods such Allied detachments as may be left exposed and attacking Christian populations.

5. THRACE AND CONSTANTINOPLE (*vide* map attached)⁴

(1) *Western Thrace* (region between the River Mesta and River Maritsa).—
In effective occupation of the Allies.

Troops available—

(1) Xanthi district—

9th Greek Division (less 2 infantry regiments, 3,500 rifles).

(2) Gumuljina, River Maritsa—

French—3 battalions (3,500 rifles), 3 squadrons, 1 battery.

Italian—1 company at Ferejic.

(2) *Eastern Thrace* (Adrianople Vilayet) from the River Maritsa on the west to the Chatalja Lines on the east—

Turks, Regular—2,500 rifles.

Nationalist irregular bands.—Estimated at 30,000 rifles roughly organized with proportion of trained officers.

Allied.—One Greek battalion on Constantinople-Demotika railway (1,200 rifles).

Two French squadrons just south of Adrianople.

75 per cent. of the population of Eastern Thrace are Moslems. The bulk of the Moslem civil population has been armed, with a view to resisting Greek annexation. The Christian villagers are armed to a lesser extent than the Moslems. The Greek Government, while believed to be confident as to their ability to take over the whole of Thrace, has lately expressed some anxiety about the exposed situation of the Greek battalion, strung out in detachments along the Constantinople-Demotika railway.

(3) *Constantinople area* (east of the Chatalja Lines)—

Turks, Regular—3,300 rifles.

Irregular (in case of a general rising)—20,000 rifles.

Allied, Land—24,000 rifles.

Sea—Allied fleets.

(4) Without attacking Constantinople, there seems to be little reason why the Turks should not take practically uninterrupted measures to eliminate the Christian population between the River Maritsa and the Chatalja Lines, unless joint action is taken by the Allies, *vide* Part II 3 (a).

6. GREEKS IN AIDIN VILAYET

Forces available are:—

Turk.—Regular, 2,000. Nationalist, 17,000, at present in front line. The number of men available to oppose a Greek advance will vary with the depth of Greek penetration. It has been estimated that 60,000 armed men might be raised between the Anatolian Railway and Smyrna.

Greek.—60,000 (bayonets).

⁴ Not reproduced.

Advantages to Turks

(a) Greek position is not tactically or st[r]ategically good. It is divided into sectors by ridges running east and west, with very little transverse communication.

(b) Greek methods of occupation have roused very strongly against them the feelings of the whole district, where large numbers of Turks have had to leave their homes; recruiting for Nationalists would be good and enthusiasm would be easily raised. The Greek moral is rather uncertain.

Disadvantages

(a) Large number of resident Greeks in Smyrna area, therefore assistance from inside would not be readily forthcoming.

(b) Greek forces are well formed and in great relative strength. A successful result could hardly be hoped for.

(c) An advance and reprisals are more easily undertaken by Allies here than elsewhere.

7. CILICIA

Turkish Force.—Regulars— 1,500.

Nationalists—7,000, increasing possibly to 20,000 in the event of a National rising.

Allies.—30,000.⁵

Factors for—

(a) Elimination of Christian wedge between Turks and Arabs.

(b) Dispersion of French, and ease in cutting off detachments.

(c) Vulnerability of French communications. Repossession of Baghdad Railway.

(d) Possible sympathy, and even assistance from Arabs and Syrians.

Factors against—Dispersal of force.

8. ARMENIA

Turkish Forces.—Regulars— 10,000.

Nationalists—18,500, increasing possibly to 50,000 in the event of a National rising.

Armenians.—Army of 20,000, with 36 mountain guns.

Factors for—

(a) Necessity for action before Allied equipment can reach Armenia.

(b) Would be popular.

(c) Gives direct results in gain of territory.

(d) Direct Allied intervention not expected.

(e) Large numbers of Muslim sympathisers in Armenian territory.

Factors against—

(a) Lack of transport and mobility.

(b) Uncertainty regarding attitude of Georgia and her relations with the Allies.

⁵ Note in the copy of this memorandum as transmitted by the War Office: 'According to French information, this figure presumably includes all Administrative Services.'

9. NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

Turkish forces.—Regular, 2,400.

Arab tribesmen possibly 10,000 irregulars for a short period at this season of the year.

Allies.—Maximum of one Indian Division.

Factors for—

- (a) Isolation of British forces in north of Mesopotamia.
- (b) Great prestige of success here.
- (c) Possible assistance of Kurdish tribesmen and Arabs.
- (d) British difficulties of retaliation.

Factors against—

- (a) Dispersal of force.
- (b) Unreliability of tribal assistance.
- (c) Well organized arrangements of British in Mesopotamia.
- (d) Unlikelihood of great results even if locally successful.

10. PASSIVE RESISTANCE, COMBINED WITH GUERILLA TACTICS

This seems far the most likely military policy for the Nationalists to adopt. The Allies would find it difficult to deploy from the few seaports and their immediate hinterlands. Any forward movement or any attempt at intercommunication by land would be very costly. Unrest and raiding in the north of Mesopotamia, both by Arabs and Kurds, and in Syria, Cilicia and Palestine can be assisted and encouraged, thus throwing great strain on the administration and precluding the reduction of garrisons as well as immobilizing them.

All this can be done without any great expenditure of money or munitions on the part of the Turks. Deprivation of imports from Europe would affect them less almost than any other country, except perhaps in the matter of piece goods. Munitions they have methods of obtaining, and in the matter of food they are self-supporting.

Any serious retaliatory advances by the Allies into the mountains would require highly organized and costly operations necessitating road-making, and would be a very slow business. The Nationalists may therefore hope, by following a Fabian policy and by active propaganda in neighbouring countries, to make the financial burden of policing and defending their new acquisitions intolerable to the Allies, and thus to cause either their partial withdrawal or an offer of more favourable terms as a compromise—in other words to cease their interference. Time is on the side of Mustapha Kemal.

11. To recapitulate the above. The soundest course for Mustapha Kemal to take, from his own point of view, will be to leave as many Nationalists as possible to work on their farms while concentrating, as soon as weather conditions permit, sufficient of his followers in order to:—

- (a) Preclude any deep advance by the Greeks into Anatolia.
- (b) Attack any outlying Allied detachments. This will include an attempt to regain control of the Anatolian Railway with a view to blockading Constantinople for food supplies.

- (c) Watch the Russian-Armenian frontier.
- (d) Oppose any Allied landing, other than in serious strength at Trebizond.
- (e) Co-operate with Arabs against the British on the Euphrates.
- (f) Bolster up opposition to the French in Cilicia.

At the same time anti-Greek outbreaks may be expected in Thrace.

Mustapha Kemal's course would then be to await the moment when the economic position and general political situation amongst the Allies precludes any direct interference in his country.

The position is one which can be dealt with politically more effectively than by military measures on the part of the Allies. If it is to be dealt with militarily, protracted operations by fully equipped armies must be prepared for.

PART II—OPERATIONS

I. SUMMARY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS IN THE TREATY

The Treaty of Peace with Turkey, as provisionally approved by the Supreme Council, contains certain conditions which the Turks are most unlikely to accept, and which, therefore, cannot be carried into effect unless the Allies are prepared to take military measures to enforce them. The most prominent of these provisions are the following:—

- (a) The transfer to Greek sovereignty of the whole of European Turkey, less the area south of either the Enos-Midia or Chatalja lines as the Allied Powers may decide, and it is understood that the latter is the more probable decision.
- (b) The practical cession of the Sanjak of Smyrna to Greece.
- (c) The renunciation in favour of the Allied Powers of all the Turkish rights and titles over Kurdistan.
- (d) The recognition of Armenia as an independent State, the area of which is to be roughly as follows:—

On the east, the Turko-Persian frontier.

On the south, the northern boundary of Kurdistan, that is to say, a line running approximately east and west, just south of Lake Van.

On the west, a line running approximately due south from Surmena to Hatabdagh, thence to Bag Hirdagh, thence to Musa and Bitlis, inclusive.

- (e) The constitution of a demilitarized area lying between Trebizond and Erzincan with an average width of 40 miles.

In addition to the above, Turkey has also to renounce all her rights over Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Arabia, but these clauses of the Treaty present no particular military difficulty as Turkey has already lost control over them.

2. PROBABLE ACTION OF THE TURKS

It may be confidently expected that Turkey will offer the utmost measure of resistance to the conditions enumerated in paragraph 1, and in this

connection the British High Commissioner, in a telegram dated the 10th of March,⁶ pointed out that the probable consequence of presenting a Treaty of such severity would be as follows:—

- (a) A refusal on the part of Turkey to sign the Treaty, or, if signed, to ratify it, or, if ratified, to execute it.
- (b) A general rising, involving the abdication or deportation of the Sultan, the flight of the Parliament to Anatolia, the accession of a new Sultan and the creation of a new Government in Asia Minor, accompanied by wide-spread massacres of Christians both in Asia Minor and Thrace.
- (c) Attempts at concerted action in Europe between the Turks and Bulgarians against the Greeks.
- (d) The possibility of combined action in Asia between the Turks, the Arabs and the Bolsheviks.

3. JOINT ACTION BY THE ALLIES

The joint action[s] which the Allies could take in order to coerce the Turks into complying with the terms of the Treaty are as follows:—

(a) IN THRACE the French troops under General Franchet d'Esperey, assisted by such forces as could be furnished by Greece, should be able to maintain order and prevent the wholesale massacre of Christians.

(b) IN THE SANJAK OF SMYRNA the Greek forces amounting to some 6 divisions might push forward in order to occupy the Anatolian Railway between Konia and Eskishehr. It must be pointed out, however, that such an operation holds no definite promise of decisive result, and may entail the maintenance of a large Greek force in this area for an indefinite period, and if Greece is to take over Thrace as well as Smyrna, it is unlikely that she can afford to maintain such a force for long. It must also be pointed out that any military reverse which the Greeks may receive will immediately affect Allied prestige and will encourage Turkish outbreaks in regions where England and France are more directly concerned.

(c) IN CILICIA the French might possibly advance from Marash into the interior, but it is difficult to point to any objective within reasonable distance the attainment of which would have any considerable influence in coercing the Turks to comply with the Treaty. Moreover, at present the French forces in Cilicia and Syria have enough to do to keep the zone they now occupy under control, and it would be necessary to reinforce the existing garrison by two or three French divisions before they would be in a position to carry out such an advance. It is understood, however, that the French military authorities have stated definitely that it would be quite impossible for them to undertake any advance into the interior.

(d) IN THE AIDIN VILAYET the Italians are not likely to give much assistance in any operations against the Turks, indeed the whole trend of their policy has been rather less than loyal to the Allies. The Italian force here is on very

⁶ i.e. Constantinople telegram No. 211; see No. 19, n. 2.

bad terms with the neighbouring Greek troops, and would never work in concert with them.

Furthermore, the Italians failed to provide a force to relieve us in the Caucasus,⁷ and they would find it much harder to despatch an expeditionary force now.

(e) IN THE CONSTANTINOPLE AREA the British Army of the Black Sea is now reduced to the strength of one division (apart from the detachment at Batoum), and will be fully employed keeping order in Constantinople itself, and ensuring the freedom of the Straits.

(f) IN KURDISTAN.—As regards Kurdistan it is impossible to foresee what difficulties may arise in giving effect to the Provision of the Treaty which concerns this province, as the attitude of the Kurds themselves is uncertain, but it is clear that the Allied Powers are not in a position to make any military intervention on the spot, and they must rely therefore on the pressure they can exert at Constantinople and elsewhere.

(g) ARMENIA. Of all the conditions of the Treaty, however, the one which will arouse the greatest opposition among the Turks and which will be the hardest to enforce is that under which a large area of Turkey in Asia is to be handed over to Armenia. The proposed boundaries of Armenia will include the Turkish stronghold of Erzerum and Turkish territory for a distance of from 60–80 miles west of this place. It can hardly be anticipated that the Turks will be willing to evacuate these regions without any remonstrance and compulsion of some kind will be necessary. The Armenian Army comprises some 20,000 men with 36 mountain guns. The Turkish forces in the area Erzerum—Sivas—Trebizond amount to 10,000 regulars and 18,500 irregulars, a total of 28,500, with a considerable quantity of heavy and light artillery.

In addition to the above it is more than probable that they would collect reinforcements for other fronts, i.e., Marash, Eskishehr and possibly the Aidin Vilayet, so that they might well be able to concentrate a force of close on 40,000 men in this area. The maintenance and supply of a force of this strength should not present any serious difficulties, as the neighbouring country is rich and sufficient supplies are obtainable.

On the other hand, the fighting quality of the Armenian Army is by no means high and, with the numbers at its disposal, it would be unable to take the offensive against the Turks, even if it were feasible to utilize the whole of the available fighting troops and none were required to watch the Azerbaijan frontier. Moreover, the extent of front from the Black Sea to Lake Van, which would require guarding, is close on 300 miles, a task quite beyond the capacity of the forces at the disposal of the Armenian Government.

Consequently if the new territory is to be handed over to Armenia the direct military assistance of the Allies will be needed. External pressure, whether economic or otherwise, will not avail in a country like Asia Minor, which is self supporting and where the inhabitants are not very sensitive to the effects produced by a blockade or the restriction of commerce.

⁷ See Vol. VIII, No. 6, minute 3.

With the exception of the route from the railhead at Sarikamish, itself almost as distant from Erzerum and the probable theatre of operations as Trebizond, and impracticable owing to the hopelessly indifferent condition of the 400 miles of railway from Batoum, there is only one possible means for troops to reach Erzerum from the sea and that is by the road from Trebizond, *viâ* Gumushkhane and Baiburt, a distance of 196 miles.

For nearly 100 miles this *chaussée* runs in a defile liable to obstruction by landslips and floods and with scarcely any space for encamping troops or room for carts to pass. The country on either hand is traversed only by rough mule tracks, with the single exception of the Erzingan Road which branches off at Tehka. Gradients of 1 in 10 have to be negotiated, and the passes reach a height of 8,200 feet. Trebizond is an open roadstead and is at the mercy of the prevailing wind from the north-west. Two adjacent ports at Platana and Kovata are more sheltered and would be used in conjunction with Trebizond, but at none of these places can ocean-going vessels come alongside, and a landing can only be effected by means of small boats.

The Russians in 1916 employed a force of approximately double the Turkish strength in their operations against Erzerum, and they advanced overland from Kars. Consequently, even allowing for the superiority of the Allied troops, a force at least equal to the available Turkish Army would be required, exclusive of such numbers as would be necessary for the lines of communication, and these would have to be considerable in view of the guerilla warfare which would certainly attend operations in a country which is predominantly Turkish. Assuming, therefore, that in the Erzerum area the Turks can dispose of some 40,000 combatants, we should have to be prepared to place a like number in the field, together with the necessary lines of communication and ancillary troops.

This would entail the provision of at least two divisions with another division to protect the lines of communication, and a vast organization of mechanical, horse and pack transport which would be essential for the maintenance of a force operating under such conditions. Furthermore, before operations could commence, the Trebizond-Erzerum road would require to be remade to take mechanical transport, an immense undertaking considering the distance and the grades [*sic*]. Even supposing this could be carried out, it would hardly be feasible to maintain and supply an army of three divisions, at such a distance from its base by one single road with no alternative means of communication.

The seizure of Erzerum would not in itself suffice, the adjacent country would require to be occupied and troops pushed up to the new Turco-Armenian frontier (300 miles in extent).

The resulting operations would partake of the nature of guerilla warfare, which is a method of fighting above all things to be avoided. The whole spirit of the art of conducting small wars is to strive for the attainment of decisive methods, the very essence of partisan warfare from the point of view of the enemy being to avoid definite engagements. Consequently, it usually happens that many more men are required than were originally estimated, and

that warfare of this nature continues for years as was the case in the operations of the Dutch in Achin, of the French against Abd el Kadir⁸ in Algeria, and the Spaniards in Cuba and Morocco.

The provision of the necessary shipping to transport and maintain an expeditionary force of this size is an important factor which affects the problem and further adds to the difficulties of forcing the Turks to hand over these regions to Armenia.

The arguments put forward in the above paragraph apply also to the proposal to demilitarize the zone east of the line Tireboli-Kamakh. Military measures to enforce these terms will be required and after occupying Erzerum and establishing the Armenians in their new territory it would be necessary to take possession of Erzingan and other adjoining centres so as to enforce the military evacuation of the Trebizond Hinterland. In addition to the above the Allies would probably be compelled to maintain a force in this zone for some time to come to prevent it being re-occupied by Turkish troops.

4. SITUATION AS REGARDS BRITISH MILITARY RESOURCES

The General Staff cannot point to any sources from which the necessary expeditionary force for Armenia can be found. It is not feasible to reduce the present garrisons in Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt, or on the Rhine. There remain, therefore, only the troops in England and Ireland, the strength of which is as follows:—

Ireland	28 battalions
England	49 battalions

As regards Ireland the condition of affairs there is such that extra battalions are at present being sent to make the effective infantry strength up to 25,000, which the Commander-in-Chief considers an absolute minimum for safety.

In England, owing to the possibility of industrial unrest, the forces are already dangerously low, and it would only be possible to find a few battalions for service abroad.

Furthermore, the men of these battalions are nearly all raw recruits, and the units are at present quite unsuited to take part in active operations. For the above reasons it would be quite impossible to provide the necessary technical personnel, e.g., mechanical transport drivers and particularly signals, of which our present garrisons are dangerously deficient, and which are essential for an expedition of this nature.

In short, the military assets of England are barely sufficient, if even they are sufficient, for the needs of the British Empire, and beyond our present effort in Batoum, Constantinople and the Straits, Palestine, Egypt and Mesopotamia, nothing more can be done with the forces at our disposal.

5. THE POSSIBILITY OF AN OUTBREAK OF ATROCITIES

There is one very serious objection to any renewal of military operations in Asia Minor, and that is that they are bound to be followed by massacres of non-combatants on a very serious scale.

⁸ A celebrated Algerian chieftain (1808–83) and opponent of the conquest of Algeria by France. After five years' captivity in France (1847–52) he eventually settled in Damascus.

If Turkish resentment is really aroused, as it will be by a Greek advance towards the Anatolian Railway, the Turks will certainly murder the defenceless Armenians and other Christians still remaining in Anatolia. It is almost equally certain that the Greeks and Armenians will massacre unoffending Moslems on a similar scale, and it will be out of the power of the Allies to prevent this useless bloodshed once it starts.

6. EFFECT ON OTHER MOSLEM RACES

It is unnecessary to recapitulate in detail the effect which the severity of the proposed peace conditions may produce amongst the Mahomedan population of other portions of the British Empire; it will suffice here to say that the Arab inhabitants of Palestine and Mesopotamia and the Mahomedan portion of the Indian population will certainly not receive the news with indifference, and though a serious outbreak may be avoided, it must nevertheless be expected that our difficulties in controlling the Mahomedan areas of the Empire will bear a direct relation to the severity of the terms of the Treaty with Turkey.

It seems, therefore, politic to consider very carefully what advantages are likely to accrue to us from terms of such severity before we resort to them.

7. CONCLUSION

From a military standpoint it is undesirable that any conditions should be embodied in the Peace Treaty which the Allies are not prepared to enforce.

In the preceding paragraphs an endeavour has been made to show what the enforcement of some of the conditions will entail.

It may be that the Supreme Council prefer to include all these terms on the chance of Turkey observing them and with no intention of enforcing them if she do[es]n't. In this case military opinion on such a policy is probably not desired.

It must, however, be pointed out that the conditions of the Treaty contain little promise of bringing peace to a country which is sorely in need of peace; nor do they, from a military point of view, bring anything but added anxiety and responsibility to all entrusted with the defence of those portions of the British Empire which are linked either by territorial or religious affinities, to what was once the Turkish Empire.

No. 24

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 17, 9 a.m.)

*No. 238 Telegraphic [E 1693/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 16, 1920, 12.40 p.m.

Your telegram No. 221 of 13th March.¹

Occupation was effected on the morning of 16th March.

The High Commissioners held final meeting on 15th March.

¹ No. 21.

In order to obviate question relative to positions of General Milne and General Franchet d'Esperey, they decided not to issue instructions to the military authorities, but simply to record decision based on instructions of Supreme Council, and leave each High Commissioner to make any necessary communications to the military authorities.

Decision covered following points:

1. Military occupation by the Allies as from 10 o'clock on morning of 16th March.
2. Execution by the military authorities of all necessary measures.

Such measures to include:—

3. Occupation of Ministries of War and Admiralty, indirect control of all orders, etc., emanating from them; control of posts, telegraphs and telephones; strict control of the police; issue and enforcement of all regulations necessary to maintain order in occupied area.

Copy of this decision, with joint covering letter based on numbered paragraphs in your telegram No. 187 of 6th March,² was handed to the Grand Vizier by Mr. Ryan at 9.40 on morning of 16th March. Sultan was informed as soon as possible afterwards through political officer of French High Commissioner and First Secretary of the Palace.

Grand Vizier appeared to be taken by surprise, though the Government were aware that Allies contemplated some sort of action against Nationalist leaders. Sultan said he had always wished to work with Allied representatives, and expressed regret at the occupation.

Cabinet has taken no decision regarding resignation.

General Milne's measures included several arrests early this morning. In one case resistance was offered, and in fight which ensued one British and five Turkish soldiers were killed. Occupation was otherwise carried out according to plan without incident.

General Wilson has in strong proclamation assured the public of non-

² See No. 15, n. 2. The allied joint covering note read as follows:

'Les Hauts-Commissaires de France, de Grande-Bretagne et d'Italie sont chargés par le Conseil suprême allié de porter à la connaissance de votre Altesse qu'à partir du 16 mars, à 10 heures, la ville de Constantinople sera placée sous l'occupation militaire des Puissances alliées.

'Votre Altesse trouvera ci-joint le texte de la décision prise à ce sujet par les Hauts-Commissaires.

'De plus, nous sommes chargés d'exiger que le Gouvernement ottoman désavoue immédiatement Moustapha Kemal Pacha, ainsi que les autres dirigeants du mouvement soi-disant "nationaliste," dont la responsabilité pour les événements et les excès qui viennent de se produire sur plusieurs points, et notamment en Cilicie, ne peut être mise en doute.

'Nous devons porter à la connaissance du Gouvernement ottoman qu'en cas de renouvellement de semblables événements ou d'excès analogues, les conditions envisagées pour la paix avec la Turquie deviendraient plus rigoureuses et que les concessions déjà faites seraient retirées.

'Nous sommes chargés d'ajouter que l'occupation militaire alliée de Constantinople sera maintenue jusqu'à ce que les conditions du Traité de Paix soient acceptées et mises à exécution.'

interference with well-behaved persons, but threatening condign punishment in case of resistance.³

High Commissioners have authorised communiqué explaining reasons for action, but noting desire of Allies to uphold Sultan's authority in places to be left under Turkish administration, emphasising the fact that maintenance or otherwise of decision not to deprive Turks of Constantinople will depend on whether they refrain from disorder and massacre; and stating that persons arrested will be held responsible for the past misdeeds and the future consequences thereof. General tone of communiqué is reassuring to well-affected Turks. Main object is to impress on all Turks, and especially those in provinces, that Constantinople is practically held as pledge for good conduct.⁴

Communiqué has already been telegraphed to all provinces. High Commissioners were unable to devise any better means of minimising danger of massacres. Calm and circumspection have been enjoined on head[?]s of non-Moslem communities here.

Turkish Government have issued short communiqué announcing occupation and enjoining tranquillity.⁵

Minor High Commissioners and other Allied forces and neutral representatives have been officially notified of the occupation.

Despatch follows.⁶

³ A copy of Gen. Wilson's (British Officer Commanding the Allied Forces, Constantinople) proclamation was sent to the Foreign Office as enclosure 3 in Constantinople despatch No. 373; see n. 6 below.

⁴ An English translation of this communiqué is printed as No. 29 below. The French text was sent to the Foreign Office as enclosure 4 in Constantinople despatch No. 373.

⁵ Copy sent to the Foreign Office as enclosure 5 in Constantinople despatch No. 373.

⁶ Constantinople despatch No. 373 of March 18, received April 7, not printed.

No. 25

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 18, 11 a.m.)*

*No. 245 Telegraphic [E 1743/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 17, 1920, 11.30 p.m.*

Colonel Jar Tayar, Commander of the Turkish troops in Thrace, informed General Milne's representative at Adrianople on [1]6th March that on account of British action at Constantinople—

1. He has assumed supreme control in Adrianople vilayet, and will not accept orders from Constantinople.
2. Similar procedure would be followed in Asia Minor east of Ismidt.
3. He had cut all telegraphic communications with Constantinople.

He wished General Milne to be informed—

1. As concerns Adrianople vilayet, the terms of the armistice with Turkey are no longer in force.
2. Entry of any Allied forces into vilayet will be opposed by force.

3. He proposes setting up an independent Government in vilayet, and hopes to be able to protect lives and property of Christians.

4. Unless peace terms are accepted by a representative Turkish Government (and not one under the coercion of Great Britain) he will resist with all the forces at his disposal such terms.

(Repeated to Egyptforce, No. 17; Bagdad, No. 22; Tiflis, No. 38; Sofia, No. 21.)

No. 26

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 955 [E 1800/1729/44]

My Lord,

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 17, 1920.

In the course of a conversation with me this afternoon, M. Cambon spoke seriously about the unfortunate position that had arisen in Constantinople owing to the conflict of military authority there.¹

Commencing with a historical account of the stages by which the present situation had been reached, he said that the general view upon which the French Government had acted, and from which they could not possibly recede, was that the command of all Allied Forces on the European side of the Straits appertained to the French, while the British were in charge on the Asiatic side. This partition had formed the basis of the agreement arrived at in December 1918,² and in substance it had never been departed from since. Speaking in his private capacity, M. Cambon said that he was quite ready to admit that General Franchet d'Esperey had shown an almost complete lack of tact and judgment. Some of his proceedings, which the Ambassador named, had been well qualified to excite extreme irritation, and the French Government were so conscious of this fact that they were quite willing to withdraw him as soon as this could be done without conveying a personal affront, and to replace him by another French commander, General Guillaumat, who was well known to the British, and had established excellent relations with them in the course of the war. But, when General Guillaumat arrived upon the scene, the French Government must insist that his command should be identical with that of General Franchet d'Esperey, and that he should be in supreme charge of the Allied Armies in Constantinople, just as he was of all the Allied Forces in Turkey-in-Europe. The position of the French Government, M. Cambon added, would be gravely compromised if they were to acquiesce in any other solution.

I replied that our difficulties were not less serious, and indeed were even greater, because with us it was a question, not merely of national pride or prestige, but of practical expediency on the spot. I was afraid that, in existing circumstances, my Government could not accept—and in fact the War Office had never been willing to accept—the proposition that General Franchet d'Esperey was in supreme command when he entered the walls of Constantinople. On the contrary, it was the British and not the French who

¹ For an earlier Anglo-French discussion on this subject see Vol. VII, No. 56.

² See enclosure in No. 13.

had been charged with supervising the military terms of the Armistice. Constantinople had been specially reserved as a sphere of British military command. In the proceedings at Constantinople which culminated in the military occupation of the city yesterday, by far the greater part of the occupying Force had been supplied, not by the French, but by the British. Indeed, my information was that the French and Italians had afforded as little assistance as they could, and had done their best to throw the entire onus and responsibility upon the British. Such had been their attitude at Constantinople throughout the recent crisis. General Franchet d'Esperey had conducted himself with a want of tact so supreme that I had seriously considered, a short time ago, upon the urgent request of the War Office,³ making a demand for his recall by the French Government. I had desisted from doing so only because of the crisis that had arisen. So long as there was an Army of the East such as existed in the days when an attack upon Constantinople by land was anticipated by the Allied Forces, so long was the authority of General Franchet d'Esperey not only natural, but expedient. That Army, however, had disappeared. General Franchet d'Esperey was usually elsewhere than in Constantinople, and it was intolerable that, at critical moments, he should descend upon the city, where the burden of military responsibility and military action had rested almost exclusively in British hands, and should oust a British commander from the post of authority. The British Government, I felt sure, would not acquiesce in any such solution.

I went on to say that, on the present occasion, General Franchet d'Esperey had shown once more how ill-fitted he was for his post, and in how high-handed a manner he interpreted his responsibilities. We had just heard from General Milne that, upon the occupation of the Turkish Ministry of War by the Allied Forces, the French General had actually insisted on appointing a senior French Officer to be Minister of War.⁴ Was it possible that the British commander or the British Government could acquiesce in any such proceeding? The British Government had no objection to offer to the French troops in Constantinople being commanded and directed by the French General in command, and we should do our best to secure the loyal co-operation of our own troops and commander with them; but, in my judgment, the best solution would be, not to bring General Guillaumat or any other French commander upon the scene at the present stage, but to withdraw General Franchet d'Esperey from Constantinople, to leave the local command for the moment in the hands of the British General, and to discuss with us the best solution that could be arrived at for a definite understanding when the immediate crisis was over.

M. Cambon did not think that such a solution would be at all palatable to his Government, and we parted without getting much nearer to a settlement of the dispute.

I am, &c.

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

³ In a letter of March 10 (not printed) from Maj.-Gen. Sir Percy Radcliffe.

⁴ This information was reported in Gen. Milne's telegram G.C. 305 of March 15 to the War Office.

No. 27

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 20, 10.15 a.m.)

No. 247 Telegraphic [E 1894/3/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 18, 1920, 10 p.m.

My telegram No. 238 of 16th March.¹

Protest has now been received in form of a note from Grand Vizier in reply to collective note handed to his Highness on 16th March. Protest is based on absence of justification, it being submitted that no disorders existed or could have been anticipated in . . .,² where Allied forces were ample to prevent them. The movement in Anatolia, continues the note, owes its origin to Greek occupation and its consequent horrors, but was further intensified by rumour of intention to create a big Armenia and a Greek Pontus.

The Central Government disapproves and disavows the excesses committed in this movement, for which, however, it was not responsible and which it was unable to control in consequence of circumstances arising out of prolonged armistice conditions and limits placed on its authority.

As regards Marash incidents, Grand Vizier refers to previous explosions and renews invitation to institute enquiry by Mixed Commission. (This invitation is now being considered by my colleagues and myself.)

Note concludes with expression of confidence that no further disorders will occur, and that in any case Supreme Council will not hold the Ottoman nation responsible for acts of individuals to the extent of still further stiffening the terms of peace to the disadvantage of Turkey.

Text follows by next bag.³

¹ No. 24.

² The text is here uncertain.

³ Received in the Foreign Office on April 7 as enclosure in Constantinople despatch No. 385 of March 19, not printed.

No. 28

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 22, 8.30 a.m.)

No. 263 Telegraphic [E 1951/3/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 21, 1920, 2 p.m.

Your telegram No. 239 of 19th March.¹

My telegram No. 262 of 21st March² gives exact English translation of French text. Turkish text, though necessarily free translation owing to importance of using style which would appeal forcibly to the Turks, agrees closely with French. I have given a literal translation in Turkish of three passages when agreement is less closely . . .³ than elsewhere.

Your telegram No. 207⁴ had not reached me when High Commissioners

¹ Not printed.

² No. 29.

³ The text is here uncertain.

⁴ See No. 21, n. 2.

held final meeting on 15th March. Only knowledge which High Commissioners then had of views of Supreme Council regarding proclamation was derived from telegram received by French admiral regarding decision of Supreme Council. High Commissioners understood that to mean that they were not to issue proclamation involving assumption by Allies of full authority in occupied area. To avoid misunderstanding they decided to issue statement (which had already been prepared in form of proclamation) as communiqué, with necessary changes of wording.

High Commissioners were unanimously and strongly of opinion that issue of a statement defining reasons for, and scope of, action was imperative, if only to minimise danger to Christians in the interior. Special steps were taken to have it telegraphed without delay to provinces.

Communiqué had excellent effect here. It is not likely to be published in provinces generally, but it will be in hands of Nationalist leaders and their associations. It will tend to divide their councils, and will impress on all necessity for respecting lives of Christians in view of warning based on your telegram No. 187,⁵ that concession made to Turks regarding Constantinople will probably be withdrawn if massacres occur.

⁵ See No. 15, n. 2.

No. 29

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 22)*

*No. 262 Telegraphic [E 1993/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 21, 1920

Following is translation of French text of communiqué issued by Allied High Commissioners:¹

‘Five and a half years ago the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress, who had got into their hands the destinies of Turkey, allowed Germany to impose her will upon them and caused Turkey to participate in the general war. The results of this ill-omened policy are known. The Turkish Government and people, after a thousand disasters of every kind, suffered such a defeat that the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress saw no solution but to conclude an armistice and take to flight on the conclusion of the armistice. A heavy task devolved on the *Entente* Powers. This task was to lay the foundations of a peace which would ensure the future happiness and development of social and economical life of all the peoples inhabiting the former Ottoman Empire, without distinction of race or creed. While the Peace Conference was engaged in the performance of this task, certain persons representing the ideas of the fugitive leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress organised a so-called national organisation, which, taking no account of the orders of the Sultan or of the Government, forcibly recruits men already exhausted by the war, extorts from the

¹ On March 16; see No. 28 and No. 24, n. 4.

population forced contributions for its own ends, and multiplying the causes of dissension everywhere, seems to wish to open a new era of hostilities. The Conference pursued, none the less, its work of pacification; it adopted the tranquillising (in Turkish: *sic*), comforting to Ottoman hearts, decision to maintain Constantinople under Turkish Administration, but on condition, as the Sublime Porte was warned, that the Christians in the provinces should no longer be exposed to danger, and that all attacks against the forces of the *Entente* and their allies should cease immediately. The adherents of the alleged national organisation, however, far from seconding in this matter the good-will of the Central Government, sought on the contrary to hamper it (in Turkish: *sic*). Although the Central Government, confronted with this warning, showed good-will up to a certain extent, the persons working under the assumed name of national organisation were unfortunately unwilling to abandon their agitation. On the contrary, they sought to make the Government participate in their own movement. This situation, so prejudicial to the conclusion of the longed-for peace, compelled the *Entente* Powers to consider the measures necessary for ensuring the execution of the peace terms to be decided on in the near future. There was but one means—namely, the provisional occupation of Constantinople. As this measure is now being put into effect, the following points are brought to the knowledge of all:—

- '1. The occupation is provisional.
- '2. The *Entente* Powers do not intend to destroy the authority of the Sultanate; they wish, on the contrary, to strengthen that authority in all places which will remain under Turkish Administration.
- '3. The *Entente* Powers maintain their intention of not depriving the Turks of Constantinople, but if, God forbid, widespread disturbances or massacres should occur, this decision would probably be altered.
- '4. At this critical time it is the duty of everyone to go about his ordinary business, to contribute thereby to the maintenance of public security, and not to be led astray by those whose misguided conduct tends to destroy the last hope of building a new Turkey on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. In a word, it is the duty of everyone to obey the orders issuing from the Sultanate (in Turkish: *sic*) from Constantinople, still the seat of the Sultanate.
- '5. Certain persons concerned in the incitement mentioned above have been arrested in Constantinople; they will naturally have to answer for their acts and for such future consequences as may result from those acts.'

² Lord Curzon in a minute dated March 23 wrote that the High Commissioners had no authority to introduce point 3.

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 26)

No. 276 Telegraphic [E 2202/1729/44]*

Secret

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 24, 1920

My telegram No. 243 of 17th March.¹

French High Commissioner convened meeting of High Commissioners on 22nd March to discuss position of Allied representatives on controls necessitated by occupation of War Office, Admiralty, and Department of Posts and Telegraphs.

French and Italian High Commissioners admitted that commissions exercising control must be dependent on General Officer Commanding's occupying forces, but they consider that members should be on footing of equality, and they take exception to General Milne's claim to appoint British officer as president of each commission.

I told them that I had already referred question of command to His Majesty's Government, as General Milne had received instructions which could only be based on something subsequent to and different from the decision of Supreme Council at the end of 1918,² on which French base the contention that General Milne is under superior command of General Franchet.

As regards controls, I pointed out that occupation was a purely military operation, and that controls could therefore function only under, and in such manner as, General Milne might direct.

French and Italian colleagues agreed to defer to this view *de facto* in order not to delay functioning of the controls pending settlement of question of principle, as to which they made most express reservations, and which they said must be referred to Governments. I took note of reservations, and agreed likewise to refer to your Lordship.

My immediately succeeding telegram is translation of *procès-verbal* agreed on by the three High Commissioners as record of different points of view and provisional settlement arrived at.³

¹ Not printed.

² See enclosure in No. 13.

³ This telegram, No. 277 of March 24, read as follows (in Confidential Print):

'High Commissioners of France, Great Britain and Italy, after examining question of control to be established, according to decisions of Supreme Council, at War Office, Admiralty and Post and Telegraph Offices, are in entire agreement that these controls should be inter-Allied.

'British General Headquarters insist, however, that in virtue of orders received from the War Office, the Inter-Allied Control Commissions should work under their control, and under presidency of a British officer.

'High Commissioners of France and Italy consider, however, on the other hand, that these controls should, under supervision (High Direction) of British General Officer Commanding the Allied Forces in Turkey in Europe, be exercised on a footing of equality by officers belonging to the three Allied nations.

'As a solution of this divergent opinion, in order not to delay working of controls by

Supreme Council, the three High Commissioners have decided that these controls shall, with immediate effect, and until such time as instructions might be received from their Governments, be exercised *de facto* under conditions required by British General Headquarters. High Commissioners of France and Italy, however, maintained their point of view and make express reservation of question of principle. They declare that their acceptance of this provisional régime is not to be taken as anticipating in any manner the definite solution of the question of working of these controls to be given by Allied Governments.

'High Commissioner of Great Britain has taken note of these reservations and of this declaration.'

No. 31

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 248 Telegraphic [E 1950/3/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 25, 1920, 3.15 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 259 of 21st March.¹ (Constantinople food supply.)

It is doubtful whether His Majesty's Government could secure delivery at Constantinople of any wheat or flour before end of April if they wished to do so. His Majesty's Government cannot however incur any financial liability even in conjunction with their Allies to remedy a situation brought about by the Turks themselves. If the Turks continue to try to starve Constantinople this should be made known.

It is most desirable that supplies of meat, wheat or flour should be obtained through local market.

Are any special measures possible for British subjects?²

¹ Not printed.

² As enclosure in his despatch No. 423 of March 29 (not printed) Admiral de Robeck forwarded a copy of a joint note, dated March 27, which had been sent by the Allied High Commissioners to the Turkish Government 'drawing attention to the necessity for immediate action in regard to the maintenance of a sufficient food supply in the Capital'.

No. 32

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received March 27, 5.45 p.m.)

*No. 285 Telegraphic [E 2327/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 25, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Telegraphic reports have been received here in last few days to the effect that Turkish peace has again been postponed.

It is reported *inter alia* that United States Government are once more taking the lead and that President Wilson insists on expulsion of Turks from Constantinople.

I desire to represent most strongly inadvisability of further delays. It is not too much to say that Allies may thereby lose advantage of recent *coup* in

the same way as they lost chance of painlessly imposing victorious peace during first few months of armistice.

Occupation of Constantinople has so far constituted success exceeding anticipations. I do not wish to exaggerate this success prematurely, but without being a knock-out blow it has been severe blow for the nationalist movement. All indications from provinces up till now point to hesitancy on part of leaders and unreadiness in taking up our challenge and to encouragement of more conservative elements. The former is most certainly due to surprise, divided councils and consciousness of present inability to oppose effectively force of Allies.

Now therefore is the favourable moment to present terms of peace. If they are as drastic or nearly so as those indicated in your telegram No. 187 of 6th March¹ trouble in interior . . .² necessity for employing force cannot be avoided, even supposing any Government here could be induced to sign treaty or Parliament to ratify it. Such trouble, however, would proceed from movement temporarily disorganised and disheartened, whereas further delay will permit of organisers to revive *moral* of followers and again to consolidate movement, and this may greatly be facilitated by developments in Southern Russia, Caucasus, Syria, and Mesopotamia.

If peace terms were appreciably less drastic than those above indicated, it might even now be possible to pursue policy of *bloc* round Sultan composed of elements ready to accept them rather than risk complete ruin likely to result from further armed struggle with Allies.

In that alternative likewise early decision is undesirable (*sic*) and my colleague and I should receive earliest possible intimation of probable terms in order to be in a position to seize opportunity now offered of creating suggested *bloc*.

Present position is that we have taken sides in contest between Extreme Nationalists and Moderates by declaring that we regard attitude of former as definitely hostile, and by stating that it was that attitude which compelled us to occupy Constantinople. We have not, however, any positive basis on which to found policy of collaboration with Moderates.

Prospect of tolerable peace terms would supply positive basis in question. If Supreme Council authorised High Commissioners to hold out such prospect we could oust present Turkish Government, which is still in sympathy with Nationalists and useless if not positively a danger to us, and replace it by a Government prepared to collaborate with Allies. The Sultan could without difficulty be brought to abandon present attitude of indecision, and some statesman like Ferid³ or Reshid Bey⁴ would become Grand Vizier more or less under Allied auspices.

I have indicated in previous telegrams what constitutes tolerable peace in Turkish eyes.⁵ Most essential features at present time are to give satisfaction to Turks in regard to Smyrna and Adrianople.

¹ See No. 15, n. 2.

² The text is here uncertain.

³ Damad Ferid Pasha, Grand Vizier March–Oct. 1919.

⁴ Minister of the Interior in Kiamil Pasha's cabinet which resigned in Jan. 1913.

⁵ Cf. No. 40, para. 2.

I solicit such information as can be given regarding present trend of negotiations and expression of your Lordship's views on points raised above, especially question of abandoning negative attitude in the matter of Turkish Government.

No. 33

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 254 Telegraphic [E 1776/11/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 26, 1920, 1 p.m.*

Your despatches No. 211 of 28th January¹ and No. 306 of 2nd March.²

The policy at which we are aiming in the Peace Treaty, as far as it has gone, with regard to Kurdistan is neither a single protectorate for England or France, nor a divided protectorate, nor a group of States under European protection, but an autonomous Kurdistan, severed from Turkey, and not even under Turkish suzerainty.

To ascertain whether this is practicable, and how far it would be feasible to reconcile Kurdish interests with those of Armenian or Christian minorities living in their midst, we desire to consult responsible leaders of Kurdish opinion. There is no good in offering a boon to people who do not want it or would be incapable of profiting by it.

Do you recommend invitation to come to London being given to Said Abdul Kadir³ or other Kurdish spokesmen? Sherif Pasha⁴ is already available here if required.

We are addressing similar enquiry affecting Eastern and Southern Kurdistan to Bagdad.⁵

Question is one of urgency, and decision cannot be indefinitely delayed.

In attempted settlement of East, there might be considerable advantage if England were known to be author of such a programme.

¹ Not printed. The date should probably be Feb. 11.

² Not printed.

³ President of the Kurdish Club, formed in Constantinople soon after the armistice, which carried on active propaganda on behalf of Kurdish national aspirations.

⁴ Chairman of the Kurdistan delegation in Paris.

⁵ In telegram P 2170 of March 23 from the India Office to the Civil Commissioner, Bagdad, not printed.

No. 34

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received March 29, 11 p.m.)

No. 302 Telegraphic [E 2432/11/44]

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, *March 29, 1920, 8.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 254.¹

There exists much doubt whether independence or autonomy of Kurdistan is a proposition at all and in any case no such thing as 'Kurdish opinion' in the sense of coherent public opinion can be said to exist.

¹ No. 33.

Great majority of Kurds in the country expect to be ruled from above, few looking higher than tribal Aghas or religious Sheikhs amongst whom there is little common ground but whose opposition it is desirable to avoid challenging if we wish to evolve a system ensuring reasonably good Government for (? mass of) people including non-Kurdish minorities.

The few educated Kurds outside Kurdistan holding Separatist ideas are very apt to exaggerate their own influence and importance. Sherif Pasha for instance carried practically no weight and in view of his recent gravitation back towards Turks of which I (? now) have further evidence he merits little or no attention.

Kurd (? Club) here contains (? other) elements whose importance might increase were idea of separate Kurdistan to materialize. Views of representatives selected by club might be useful up to a certain point and best way to invite them might be verbal intimation to the effect that as Sherif no longer seemed to represent satisfactorily opinions of his countrymen His Majesty's Government would now be disposed to hear more direct expression of opinions of leaders here if they liked to (? send) limited number (say three) spokesmen.²

I presume you will concert with French. Otherwise there will be danger of friction which it is just now most desirable to avoid. If independent Kurdistan is created Great Britain will get the credit for it anyhow.

² In an undated minute Lord Hardinge wrote: 'We might ask the High Comm. to act as he has suggested in the penultimate para. of his tel. . . .', but Lord Curzon commented 'The proposal is I fear futile'. A note by Sir John Tilley, dated April 16, records that 'at last Eastern Committee [i.e. Inter-departmental Conference on Middle Eastern affairs held at the Foreign Office on April 13] it was taken as settled that the Kurds had no responsible leaders'.

No. 35

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 260 Telegraphic [E 2327/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 30, 1920, 1.20 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 285 of 25th March.¹

Please do not imagine that there is any unnecessary or avoidable delay in proceeding with Peace treaty. Conference² has been sitting daily for nearly seven weeks, and has accomplished an immense amount of work, which you do not perhaps sufficiently realise. Remaining stages will require another three weeks and a further meeting of the Conference abroad.

The final terms will depend to some extent upon ability of Allies to enforce them, and this cannot be determined until final military advice has been given.

It is not possible at present to hold out any such prospect to Turkish Government as you indicate: nor is it clear that, even if offered, it would make a vital difference at the end.

¹ No. 32.

² i.e. the First Conference of London.

No. 36

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 1, 10.15 a.m.)*

*No. 309 Telegraphic [E 2613/3/44]**

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 30, 1920

My telegram No. 285 of 25th March.¹

Allied High Commissioners addressed collective note to Grand Vizier on 27th March pressing for compliance with demand made in note of 16th March for disavowal of Mustafa Kemal and Nationalist leaders.² High Commissioners said that disavowals in notes received from Porte since occupation were at best partial, and asked for public and unequivocal disavowal.

Council of Ministers drafted form of public disavowal and submitted it for concurrence of High Commissioners, with intimation that it was furthest they could go. High Commissioners considered it quite inadequate. On 29th March they sent fresh note to the effect that existing formula would be . . .³ rather as approval than as disavowal. They demanded issue of communiqué stating clearly Government's disavowal of Mustafa and other leaders, and that they have acted contrary to intentions of the Government, and calling on population to obey henceforth only orders of lawful Government.

Porte then submitted formula, which is still unsatisfactory, especially in that it retains passage in still more . . .⁴ draft defining national organisation as one 'formed in consequence of tragical events in vilayet of Smyrna and of alarming rumours which followed thereon, and aimed in principle at what they . . .⁵ legitimate rights of Moslem population and the protection of their life and honour.'

High Commissioners decided on 30th March to inform Porte that this new formula was also unacceptable and to indicate the modifications, including omission of above clause, which would alone make this acceptable. This intimation will be made on 31st March.

Text will follow by bag.⁶

¹ No. 32.

² See No. 24, n. 2. A copy of the collective note, dated March 26, was received in the Foreign Office on April 15 as enclosure in Constantinople despatch No. 416, not printed.

³ The text is here uncertain. The original text read: 'serait interprété par la population plutôt comme'.

⁴ The text is here uncertain.

⁵ The text is here uncertain. The original text read: 'et qui en principe avaient pour but la défense de droits légitimes'.

⁶ Received April 23 as enclosure in Constantinople despatch No. 463 of April 3, not printed.

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 1, 2.30 p.m.)

No. 310 Telegraphic [E 2626/3/44]*

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, March 30, 1920

My telegram No. 309 of 30th March.¹

Attitude of Turkish Government since 16th March, and especially in connection with question of disavowal, can have only one explanation, namely, that present Cabinet are determined to cling to office at almost any cost. This means that Nationalists' policy is to gain time, and above all, to prevent advent to power of a Cabinet which would not merely disavow movement on paper, but would genuinely join issue with it.

Opponents of National movement are doing all they can to drive Government out. If they succeed, result must be either—

1. Advent of another temporary . . .² Cabinet under either Tewfik or some nonentity; or
2. Advent of Cabinet of open opposition to National movement, in which case Damad Ferid is the candidate most in view for Grand Vizierate; or
3. No Government at all in Constantinople.

First alternative presents no advantages for Allies over retention of present Cabinet. Third is obviously undesirable. Second presents positive advantages if presentation of Peace Treaty to Turks is to be delayed several weeks longer.

Some one must repress (? repress) Nationalist movement sooner or later. It is obviously preferable that extreme Turks should make a start now, while movement is still reeling from the shock of occupation of Constantinople, rather than that movement should be given time to rally. If it is allowed to rally, imposition of even moderate peace terms may necessitate the use of force in the interim by Allied Great Powers or the use of Greek troops with the inevitable accompaniment . . .² non-combatant . . .² and create new hatreds.

Ferid and others who might come into power in alternative (2) are cautious enough to realise that they can do little without our moral support, including free hand in the repression . . .² Nationalists. This enables us to influence present political issue considerably. In spite, however, of advantages indicated above, it is useless to take positive line if nature of terms is to be such as neither F[erid], R[eshid], nor any other Grand Vizier could accept until attempt at armed resistance had first been made. Not even F. or R. could sign peace on line indicated in your telegram No. 187,³ and when he was asked to sign such peace, any armed force he might now create to combat National movement would simply be available to swell forces of resistance to Allies.

I am in constant consultation with Allied colleagues. Our action must

¹ No. 36.

² The text is here uncertain.

³ See No. 15, n. 2.

depend on developments from day to day, but any information or guidance your Lordship can give would be most useful, especially in regard to two essential facts, namely, length of time still to elapse before treaty can be presented to Turks and present prospects as to nature of territorial conditions.

No. 38

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris) and Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

No. 407¹ Telegraphic [E 2469/3/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 1, 1920, 8 p.m.*

High Commissioners at Constantinople have addressed identic telegram to their Governments on March 29th asking authorisation to grant import permits for foodstuffs from Bulgaria to Constantinople to meet possible food shortage resulting from interruption of communication with Anatolia.²

Please ascertain views of Government to which you are accredited and say that His Majesty's Government propose to agree.³

¹ No. 407 to Paris, No. 119 to Rome.

² Constantinople telegram No. 300, not printed.

³ The authorization of the three Governments was communicated to the Turkish Government by the Allied High Commissioners in a joint note dated May 7.

No. 39

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received *April 2, 9.50 a.m.*)

*No. 317 Telegraphic [E 2621/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *April 1, 1920, 11.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 207 of 10th March, last paragraph.¹

I pointed out in my telegram No. 230 of 15th March² the grave danger to Christian population which will inevitably result if Turkish Thrace or Smyrna be assigned to Greeks by Treaty of Peace. It is almost inevitable that, on announcement of decisions to this effect, massacres will occur in the interior.

[Such]³ massacres Allies at Constantinople are entirely powerless to prevent; the only Allied forces available in Asia Minor is [*sic*] Greek army of occupation, and if this army were to advance into interior to crush Nationalists, danger to Christian element would be infinitely increased.

Consequence of this is that, if it is the intention of Allied Governments to impose drastic peace terms, [involving]³ in particular, maintenance of Greeks

¹ See No. 21, n. 2. The last paragraph of the telegram read as in the draft.

² Not printed.

³ The text was here uncertain. This word has been supplied from another printed copy of this telegram.

in Smyrna and transference to them of Thrace up to Chatalja, or extension of Armenian State into Asiatic Turkey, the only certain way to protect Christian minorities would be military occupation, by Allied forces other than Greek, of whole of Anatolia and Thrace. This, of course, in present state of European armaments, is not feasible, and thus it follows that complete protection for Christian minorities in the interior of Asiatic Turkey is impossible.

Much might, however, be done by stationing Allied men-of-war at all coast towns. This would have effect of attracting large numbers of Christians, where they could be more easily protected than in interior, and where arrangements could be made for feeding them. Another measure would be to announce that it was firm intention of Allies themselves to undertake punishment of any officials or others responsible for massacre of Christians or guilty of failure to stop such massacres.⁴

General Officer Commanding-in-chief and Commander-in-chief, Mediterranean, concur.

⁴ A copy of this telegram was sent to the Admiralty by the Foreign Office on April 5. For action taken by the Admiralty see No. 70 below.

No. 40

General Staff Memorandum on the Turkish Peace Treaty¹

[E 3245/3/44]

Secret

WAR OFFICE, April 1, 1920

With reference to Memoranda circulated by the Secretary of State for War to the Cabinet on the 24th December, 1919, and 6th January, 1920—²

1. The General Staff consider it necessary to draw attention to telegram No. 285, dated the 25th March, from His Majesty's High Commissioner at Constantinople to the Foreign Office.³ While endorsing in every respect the High Commissioner's appeal for an early decision, they, at the same time, must represent that there would seem to be little advantage in speeding up the proceedings of the Peace Conference merely with a view to an announcement for an announcement's sake, and that more harm than good will be done to the British Empire by the premature disclosure of terms which there are no available means to enforce.

2. Therefore, the General Staff would draw particular attention to the intimation conveyed by Admiral de Robeck in the above-mentioned telegram, that terms less drastic than those which have been indicated to him and offering the prospect of a peace tolerable to the Turks, might be secured without a further armed struggle between them and the Allies, which he appears to consider otherwise inevitable.

The High Commissioner in his telegram refers to previous telegrams in which he has indicated what he believes to constitute tolerable peace terms

¹ A copy of this memorandum was sent by the War Office to the Foreign Office on April 15.

² Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

³ No. 32.

in Turkish eyes. It is not known exactly to which telegrams he refers, but it is assumed that his telegram No. 176, dated the 29th February,⁴ is intended. This may be taken in conjunction with the identic telegram from the British, French and Italian High Commissioners, No. 211, dated the 10th March.⁵

3. It appears that the terms, to be tolerable to the Turks, should recognize Turkish sovereignty over Smyrna and Eastern Thrace, including Adrianople, and suzerainty over a substantial portion of the Eastern provinces of Asia Minor.

4. In the ordinary course the General Staff would not feel it either proper, or incumbent upon them, to raise any question on what is primarily a political matter. Marshal Foch has, however, been asked what military action will be necessary to enforce the proposed peace terms,⁶ and the General Staff believe that the opinion of the Commission, presided over by the Marshal, closely coincides with their own as regards the forces required, the strength of which it is understood is so great that there is no probability that the Allied Governments can provide them.

5. They think it possible that, inspired by their special ambitions, the Greeks, whose Army is the largest concentrated force available for operations against Turkey, may suggest that they are in a position to carry out the task without other Allied reinforcements.

In their opinion such an offer, if accepted, would merely have a local effect and further Greek ambitions without improving the general situation, while the situation of the Christian minorities and Armenians in remote parts of Turkey would be aggravated beyond hope of relief.

6. The fact that they are unable to recommend military action on a large scale with the Allied forces as at present constituted and disposed in the Near East, and that the blockade cannot be effectively applied to Turkey, combined with the fact that the first shadow of the peace terms has resulted in the withdrawal of Allied military detachments from the Anatolian Railway, appears to justify the General Staff in suggesting that serious attention should now be paid to the representations of the political advisers in Constantinople, and that it may not yet be too late to reconsider the terms which it is proposed to impose upon Turkey, unless His Majesty's Government are prepared to face a further call for troops. There are now no reinforcements available, and indeed our military resources are strained to a dangerous extent in meeting our existing commitments.

7. Though all reports agree that the invasion of Anatolia by Greece is the greatest source of irritation to the Turks, who consider it a dishonourable breach of the Armistice, it is the future of Armenia which most concerns the General Staff. They regret that they are now, in view of Marshal Foch's opinion, unable to contemplate the present plan for the formation of an

⁴ Cf. No. 20, n. 5. The peace terms suggested in this telegram were as summarized in section 3 below.

⁵ See No. 19, n. 2.

⁶ See Vol. VII, No. 60, minute 2. Marshal Foch was chairman of the Inter-Allied Military Committee at Versailles.

Armenian State as a practicable policy. It is true that steps are being taken to provide armament for the Armenians,⁷ but there is now no guarantee that these arms will ever reach them without the assistance of a military expedition, nor is there any likelihood that they can arrive before the middle of May at the very earliest. Months must then elapse before the armament can be distributed and the personnel trained. During this period Armenia will be exposed to Turk and Tartar attack, while the Turks will remain in the territory which has been promised to her. Even after she has been armed, her power to establish or even to defend herself has yet to be demonstrated. In short, the General Staff fail to see how the State of Armenia, if it is to include any part of the former Turkish vilayets, can be established without the goodwill of Turkey, which can hardly be obtained if the present proposals are pursued.

8. It appears, therefore, to the General Staff that the best interests of Armenia demand that her representatives should be told frankly that her existence as a self-contained State, if she desires to absorb any territory formerly Turkish, can only be guaranteed under Turkish suzerainty; there seems no reason why this should affect the interior economy of the intended State and it is believed that if these facts were once faced most of the difficulties connected with Armenia would disappear. The Turkish force at Erzerum might actually be withdrawn without an Allied expedition, while it might even be possible to secure a more favourable position for Armenia[ns] in Cilicia where they are now dependent on French protection, which has proved ineffective in spite of the comparatively large forces used for the purpose.

9. The General Staff, who are concerned only with British interests, have no desire to labour the Greek question, but desire to record their opinion that there will be no satisfactory settlement of the Turkish question and consequently no reduction in British responsibilities until Greek ambitions are curbed. It follows that the Turks should retain their administrative position in, and access to Adrianople while Smyrna should remain under the Turkish flag unless the Allied Powers are prepared to make greatly increased forces available and to undertake operations on a scale sufficient to secure the practical elimination of Turkey.

10. To sum up, the General Staff are of the opinion that to persist in the present proposals for peace with Turkey with existing forces at the disposal of the Allies is to risk a great blow to British prestige without any corresponding return and probably to cause massacres of Christians and Armenians on a scale unprecedented even in Turkey.

The remarks of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs at the Conference held on the 29th March, when he stated that 'the decisions of the Conference are provisional in character and subject to the approval and sanction of the Supreme Council,'⁸ indicate that the opportunity for a revision of the Treaty has not yet passed; and this expression is strengthened by telegram No. 260 D,

⁷ In accordance with the Supreme Council's decision of Jan. 19; see Vol. II, No. 77, minute 2. Cf. Vol. XII, Nos. 497 and 517.

⁸ See Vol. VII, No. 74, minute 2.

from the Foreign Office to Admiral de Robeck, dated the 30th March,⁹ in reply to his telegram No. 285, mentioned above, which gave rise to this paper.

⁹ No. 35.

No. 41

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 283 Telegraphic [E 2497/3/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 3, 1920, 7 p.m.

We continue to receive alarming reports as to situation of Armenians in Cilicia. (See your telegram No. 318.)¹

You should instruct Turkish Government to remind Mustafa Kemal that Allies have recently arrested several of his friends and associates who will be held as hostages for the Armenians in Cilicia.

¹ Of April 2, not printed. This had repeated a telegram received by the Armenian Patriarch at Constantinople from the Bishop of Mersina reporting the massacre of 'all Armenian and Greek refugees in and around Shar'.

No. 42

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received April 3, 11.30 p.m.)

*No. 328 Telegraphic [E 2636/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 3, 1920, 7.10 p.m.

My telegram No. 327 of 3rd April.¹

This resignation followed on further exchange of views regarding disavowal.

High Commissioners informed Minister for Foreign Affairs verbally on 31st March that Porte[']s revised formula was still unacceptable,² indicating certain passages which must be deleted to make it acceptable in principle, one being that relative to Smyrna.

On 1st April, Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed to High Commissioners long note justifying attitude of Government, and insisting on impossibility of accepting disastrous text demanded by High Commissioners.

Note did not expressly call for answer, but, on evening of 1st April, Ministry [*sic*] of Foreign Affairs asked Sir H. Lamb³ verbally that answers should be sent, saying Cabinet were firmly decided to resign if High Commissioners adhered to their view. Next morning he told French and Italian colleagues that resignation had been decided on.

He no longer seemed to think it worth while to ask for answer to note.

¹ This telegram (not printed) reported the resignation of the Turkish Cabinet on the evening of April 2.

² See No. 36.

³ Political Officer attached to the British High Commission at Constantinople.

New Grand Vizier has not yet been appointed. . . .⁴ consulting with Tewfik Pasha and Damad Ferid to form Government. Ferid is now conferring with possible colleagues.

⁴ The text is here uncertain.

No. 43

Letter from Earl Curzon to the French Ambassador

[E 2836/1729/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 4, 1920

My dear Ambassador,

I understood from your conversations with me 10 days ago¹ that you were about to submit to me on behalf of your Government certain proposals with regard to the Command-in-Chief at Constantinople.

I handed to you a Memorandum containing the views of the British Government upon the best solution of this question,² and you took the unusual step of returning it to me on the double ground that it would be distasteful to your Government to receive such a communication³ and that if I withdrew it you would submit proposals of your own. I have now been waiting for some time and have received nothing from you. Meanwhile, I hear from Constantinople that the deadlock continues. As I said before, the only true solution appears to be to confine the activities and the authority of General Franchet d'Esperey to his original Command in Thrace.⁴

I have, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON.

¹ Lord Curzon had had an interview with M. Cambon on March 25 mainly on the subject of the Emir Feisal and Syria, of which no detailed record has been traced in the Foreign Office archives.

² The reference appears to be to a note enclosed in a letter addressed by Lord Curzon to the French Ambassador on March 18. The gist of this note was that H.M.G. 'maintain the view that General Milne must henceforward be regarded as solely responsible for the execution of the military measures in Constantinople necessary to give effect to the Allied policy.

'This policy would be conveyed to General Milne by the Allied High Commissioners acting in concert.

'The degree of participation by the various Allied Powers in the constitution of administrative bodies, etc., would be a question of policy to be agreed on by the High Commissioners, and in this matter the British Government would of course give every consideration to Allied interests and to the necessity of preserving a united Allied front 'vis-à-vis' the Turks.

'General Franchet d'Esperey or his successor would retain control of the Allied Forces in Turkey-in-Europe exclusive of Constantinople, in accordance with his original rôle.'

³ Presumably because of the references it contained to Gen. Franchet d'Esperey's lack of 'reasonable tact and consideration', to the 'constant friction' that had resulted, and to a telegram (Constantinople No. 243 of March 17, not printed) from Admiral de Robeck stating that he considered 'it most advisable that steps should be taken at once to procure the removal of General Franchet d'Esperey, since his continued presence at Constantinople rendered harmonious working absolutely impossible'.

⁴ For a further conversation of April 8 on this subject between Lord Curzon and M. Cambon see Vol. IX, No. 318.

No. 44

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 6, 9.15 p.m.)

No. 333 Telegraphic [189815/189815/38]

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 5, 1920, 12.30 p.m.

According to information received by Russian representatives here from Russian General Staff at Novorossisk, Monsieur Joffe well known Bolshevik Commissary and former Soviet Ambassador (? in) Berlin has been selected for post of diplomatic representative of Soviet at Constantinople and will proceed there on resumption of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Russia.

Request I may be informed as to what action should be taken in the event of Joffe arriving in Constantinople.

It is also stated that Bolsheviks are planning to send Commercial Mission of seven or eight members to Constantinople as soon as negotiations are concluded between Allies and Soviet co-operations [? co-operatives] for resumption of Trade.¹

¹ See Vol. VIII, No. 14, n. 10.

No. 45

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 6, 9.45 p.m.)

No. 340 Telegraphic [E 2746/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 5, 1920, 5 p.m.

My telegram No. 328.¹

Ferid Pasha took office on afternoon of April 5th. My immediately following telegram gives a list of Ministers.² Cabinet is constructed entirely on non-party lines.

Unless Ferid has already squared leaders of *Entente libérale* this may be source of weakness. Several of new Ministers are almost unknown men.

Imperial Decree appointing new Grand Vizier condemns National movement in outspoken terms as rebellion which has already been gravely detrimental and may still further endanger interests of country.

Decree enjoins enforcement of legal sanctions against organisers of movement, and proclaims amnesty for those deluded into joining it. It expressly prescribes establishment of cordial relations with *Entente* Great Powers.

Translation will follow by bag.³

¹ No. 42.

² No. 341 of April 5, not printed.

³ Received on April 23 as enclosure in Constantinople despatch No. 494 of April 9, not printed.

No. 46

Mr. Lindsay (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received April 6, 6 p.m.)

No. 253 Telegraphic [E 2758/56/44]

WASHINGTON, April 5, 1920¹

Press today published summary of Harbord (? report) which President has communicated to Senate.²

Report is in 13 bound volumes. Cost of American mandate for Armenia is estimated at 757 million dollars for a period of five years at end of which mandate would be self-supporting. Initial force of 59,000 men is postulated with possible need for expansion up to 200,000.

It is recommended that Constantinople should be included in mandate and whole of Turkey in Europe withdrawn from Turkish control. Report refrains from any specific recommendation as to whether America should accept mandate. Reasons for and against this course are given. It is recognised that Great Britain could administer mandate at least equally well but claimed that British mandate would not be so acceptable to Armenians on account of constant possibility of British policy being swamped by Moslem interests.

Report is stated to have influenced President in his recent demand for expulsion of Turks from Europe.³

¹ No hour of despatch is recorded.

² For this report by the American Military Mission to Armenia, headed by Maj.-Gen. James G. Harbord, see *F.R.U.S.* 1919, vol. ii, pp. 841 ff.

³ See *F.R.U.S.*, 1920, vol. iii, pp. 750-3.

No. 47

Sir G. Grahame¹ (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received April 7)

No. 1072 [E 2773/1729/44]

PARIS, April 5, 1920

My Lord:—

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that the President of the Council told me today that General Franchet d'Esperey had gone on long leave. From the way in which he told me this, I gathered that he wished to convey that the French Government realised that it would be agreeable news to His Majesty's Government.

Monsieur Millerand then went on to say that the Presidents appointed on the three Commissions of Control at Constantinople were all British. This had not created a good impression. The appointments were made by General Milne. Apparently this impression was shared by the Italian Government.

I have, &c.,

GEORGE GRAHAME

¹ Minister in H.M. Embassy at Paris.

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 12, 9.30 a.m.)

No. 372 Telegraphic [E 3072/3/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 11, 1920, 7 p.m.

My telegram No. 340 of 5th April.¹

Ferid visited me on 7th April; record of interview is on the way to you.²

Main subject of conversation was question of proposed measures to repress so-called national movement.

Ferid said Government would use full moral influence, but force would be necessary against those who still remained recalcitrant.

Anti-Nationalist movement, organised by one Anzavour in area south of Marmora, is first weapon to hand of Government; it has had considerable local success. Anzavour occupied Panderma some days ago. Now Government have legalised his position by giving him the status of Governor of Balikesser.

Germ of similar movement exists in region between Gulfs of Guenlek [? Gemlik] and Ismid.

Ferid wants to know how far Allies will support Government in organising and utilising these movements. I have held out no hope of active British co-operation in operations against national forces in Asia Minor. I have, however, taken sympathetic view, and request that we should enable Government to make the best use of movements by allowing military material to be used for equipping anti-Nationalist forces.

This is most immediate question. Others will follow, e.g., question of permission of movement of any regular troops whose loyalty Government may be able to command. In all these matters I propose to observe principle that new Government is entitled to full Allied support (short of armed co-operation) in reasonable efforts to repress Nationalists, who continue to defy its authority.

General Milne is most immediately concerned in matter of giving permission for the use of military material and movement of troops. He agrees generally with my views, and is prepared to act on principle stated in preceding paragraph, provided I, as High Commissioner, give necessary authority. I have definitely requested him to do so.

As regards other High Commissioners, I am proceeding on the principle that they must be kept generally informed and given opportunity of expressing views, but that so far as Constantinople and Anatolia are concerned, carrying out of above programme, which is logical outcome of policy of Supreme Council, rests primarily with us in the same way that it rests with French in and north of Cilicia.

Leader of inchoate movement in the region between Gulfs of Guenlek and

¹ No. 45.

² Recorded in Constantinople despatch No. 496 of April 8, received April 23, not printed.

Ismid at present looks to us for guidance. I am inviting him indirectly to collaborate with Government and Anzavour. I hope in this way whole of Asiatic shore of Marmora would be secured.

There remains peninsula between Gulf of Ismid and Black Sea, which Nationalists are making vigorous efforts to penetrate. I am asking General Milne to study the question of how this shore should be protected in order that Nationalists may be held off Constantinople on every side. Their movement will thus be confined to the interior of Anatolia and Black Sea coast, which latter we can dominate from sea in case of necessity.

No. 49

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 334 Telegraphic [189815/189815/38]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 14, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 333 (April 5th.)¹

As the Allies have occupied Constantinople, and do not recognise the Soviet Government, we consider that the High Commissioners should warn the Porte that no Soviet Representative will be allowed in the city.

¹ No. 44.

No. 50

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 15, 9 p.m.)

No. 390 Telegraphic [E 3531/3/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 15, 1920, 2 p.m.

My telegram No. 372.¹

Government issued proclamation on April 10th condemning in unmeasured terms those who, under false cloak of Nationalism, intensified disastrous results of policy which dragged Turkey into war. Proclamation gives rank and file one week in which to make submission to Sultan, and threatens leaders and those who persist, with condign punishment.

It further expressly threatens with chastisement excesses by Moslems against Christians or *vice-versa*.

Government publish simultaneously series of Fetvas or religious pronouncements directed against Nationalists.

Effect in interior is expected to be considerable if only these pronouncements can be brought to knowledge of people. Government are considering best means of doing this. I have promised such assistance as I can give.

Translations follow by bag.²

¹ No. 48.

² Received on May 6 as enclosures in Constantinople despatch No. 542 of April 17, not printed.

Parliament was dissolved on April 12th without incident. Government, adhering to text of constitution, promises new election within four months. Reports from Panderna show that Anzavour³ is moving, but no definite news of progress is yet available.

News from Nationalist side still very vague but striking developments in interior are not improbable.

³ See No. 48.

No. 51

Admiral Sir R. Webb¹ (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 21, 11.10 a.m.)

No. 419 Telegraphic [E 3538/3/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, April 20, 1920, 3.40 p.m.

Telegram has been received by Spanish Legation here from Spanish Consul at Adana *via* Italian High Commissioner and [?] at Beirut dated April 16th requesting that British, Italian and Greek High Commissioners be informed that situation at Adana is becoming daily more serious, lives of their fellow subjects in danger, and that urgent measures for their protection should be taken.

¹ Acting British High Commissioner at Constantinople during temporary absence of Admiral de Robeck.

No. 52

Lord Hardinge¹ to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 355 Telegraphic [E 3415/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 20, 1920, 5 p.m.

Your telegram No. 372 of 11th April:² Measures against Nationalists.

Your proposals for supporting present Turkish Government are approved, subject to following two considerations:—

Firstly, War Office consider that, whenever possible, Turkish regulars, being more easy to control, should be employed rather than Turkish irregulars.

Secondly, we must be careful not to raise in mind of Damad Ferid expectations of a lenient treaty which we shall not be in a position to fulfil, and which may lead him to accuse us of perfidy later on.

¹ Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; Lord Curzon was attending the Conference at San Remo; see Vol. VIII, Chap. I.

² No. 48.

No. 53

Lord Hardinge to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 483 Telegraphic [E 3538/3/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 22, 1920, 10 p.m.*

Constantinople telegram No. 419.¹

You should ask French Government what steps they are taking to meet the situation and urge upon them the necessity for action.

You might add that the matter is the subject of frequent questions in Parliament.²

¹ No. 51.

² See, e.g., 127 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 1091-3.

No. 54

Admiral Sir R. Webb (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 23, 10 p.m.)

*No. 429 Telegraphic [E 3713/3/44]**

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, *April 23, 1920, 4.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 420 of 20th April.¹

Latest information that A[n]zavour has retired to Guenen, followed by considerable Nationalist forces, and is awaiting arrival of munitions, &c., which must now be sent to Kara Bigha.

I submit that Nationalist threat to Dardanelles, which this retirement entails, must not be overlooked.

Grand Vizier stated, on 21st April, that A[n]zavour force was unbroken, and does not appear to despair of success of policy of combating Nationalists by means of counter-move in areas where moral suasion will be available.

Moral suasion seems to have succeeded in case of Jaffar Tayar (see my telegram No. 245 of 17th March),² who returned to Constantinople yesterday. His abandonment of extreme attitude appears to have been due to exhortations of French officers at Adrianople, coupled probably with consciousness that his appeal to Nationalist sentiment in Thrace had not as much success as he hoped.

At interview with Grand Vizier on 22nd April, Jaffar Tayar seemed submissive, but I hear he says the one thing Thrace will not tolerate is Greek occupation.

It is too soon to say whether A[n]zavour's move is broken past repair, or what success, if any, moral suasion will have in Anatolia. Following points are, however, clear:—

1. A[n]zavour has suffered severe defeat in serious conflict with Nationalists, and cannot therefore be relied on as counterpoise to their efforts, even if he recovers himself at all.

¹ Not printed. This telegram had reported the collapse of the Anzavour anti-Nationalist movement in the Panderma area.

² No. 25.

2. Other movements on same lines as A[n]zavour's are too inchoate to be counted on for purposes of effective resistance to Nationalists in near future.

3. Announcement of drastic peace terms must inevitably detract still more from effectiveness of anti-Nationalists, many of whom will be thrown into sympathy, if not active co-operation, with Nationalists.

Allies must therefore rely on their own resources to enforce drastic peace, and it is desirable, from political as distinct from military point of view, that Western Powers should be prepared to undertake the task with their own forces. Use of Greek army for enforcement of peace terms in Thrace and Anatolia will involve grave danger of general massacres of civil population, Christians and Moslems alike, and devastation of the country-side.

No. 55

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Lord Hardinge (Received April 25, 12 noon)

No. 499 Telegraphic [E 3743/3/44]

PARIS, April 24, 1920, 8 p.m.

Your telegram No. 483.¹

I saw M. Paléologue this afternoon. He believes question is being discussed at San Remo.² Telegram came this morning from there directing French division of White troops now at Constantinople to proceed to Adana, being replaced at Constantinople by troops from Morocco.

He knows of no order which would justify report that French intended to retire from Cilicia although it may be necessary for military reasons to withdraw from isolated posts.³

¹ No. 53.

² See Vol. VIII, No. 16, minute 3.

³ In a telegram of April 26 to Constantinople, repeated as No. 36 to the Foreign Office, Lord Curzon reported that the 'rumours as to alleged intention of French Government to evacuate Cilicia . . . were brought to the notice of Supreme Council this morning [April 25; see Vol. VIII, *ibid.*] by Mr. Lloyd George and were emphatically denied by Monsieur Millerand who declared that France had no intention of withdrawal but was on the contrary strengthening her forces'.

No. 56

Earl Curzon (San Remo) to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

Unnumbered¹ Telegraphic [E 3747/11/44]

SAN REMO, April 24, 1920

Sent to Constantinople.

Repeated to Foreign Office. Please cancel my telegram 26.² Your telegrams 400³ and 401.⁴

¹ Repeated as No. 28 to the Foreign Office, where it was received on April 24 at 8.30 p.m.

² Of April 24, not printed.

³ In this telegram of April 17 (not printed) Admiral de Robeck had reported Ferid Pasha's proposal to use Kurdish tribes under Said Abdul Kadir (see No. 33, n. 3) to attack Turkish Nationalists from the east.

⁴ Of April 17, not printed.

Peace Treaty provides for appointment of a Commission of three Great Powers to draft, within six months of coming into force of Treaty, a scheme of local autonomy for predominantly Kurdish areas with right of appeal within one year of same date to League of Nations for complete independence.

It would be inadvisable to communicate above either to Ferid or to Abdulkadir in advance of presentation of Treaty. Whether plan propounded to you would then be expedient depends of course on nature of reception of Treaty and ensuing events.

On general grounds I should be inclined to deprecate unprovoked hostilities by Kurds which might, as suggested by you, end merely in their cutting each other's throats.

No. 57

Sir A. Geddes¹ (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received April 30, 10.20 a.m.)

No. 307 Telegraphic [E 4005/56/44]

WASHINGTON, April 29, 1920²

Your telegram No. 399.³

Reported offer of mandate for Armenia to United States⁴ to which no reference is made in your telegram has been very unfavourably received by Congress and Press here. Even Senator Hitchcock, democratic leader, has expressed himself very strongly against acceptance.

Opinion generally expressed is that this mandate involves greater political difficulties and less economic advantages than those taken by Great Britain and that offer should not even be considered unless accompanied by control of Constantinople and Straits. But even if this control were included I consider it highly improbable that America would accept.

Last night in speech at Atlantic City I strongly denied accuracy of the Press reports from San Remo. This has secured satisfactory publicity today. It was received enthusiastically at the meeting.

Considerable feeling is being worked up here against Britain on the ground of (a) alleged militarism (b) capturing control of Asiatic petroleum fields. I have dealt with (a) in the same speech I hope satisfactorily as to public good. To enable me to deal with (b) please send fullest information concerning petroleum position.⁵

¹ H.M. Ambassador at Washington.

² The time of despatch is not recorded.

³ Of April 29, not printed. This denied press reports concerning alleged Allied dissensions at the Conference of San Remo and authorized Sir A. Geddes to publish an unqualified denial of the rumours.

⁴ See Vol. VIII, No. 16, minute 2, and No. 20, minute 2.

⁵ For Lord Curzon's answer see No. 247 below.

Note from Mustapha Kemal Pasha to Earl Curzon¹

[E 7090/3/44]

ANGORA, le 30 avril 1920

Monsieur le Ministre,

J'ai l'honneur de porter à la haute connaissance de Votre Excellence qu'à la suite de l'occupation injuste et injustifiée de la Ville de Constantinople par les forces alliées, la nation ottomane considérant Son Khalif et [sic] ainsi que Son Gouvernement comme prisonnier, a eu recours à la réunion d'une Assemblée Suprême Nationale et a fait des élections sur une large échelle. L'Assemblée Suprême Nationale dans sa séance d'ouverture du 23 Avril 1920, a déclaré par une vote solennelle prendre en main les destinées présentes et futures de la Patrie, tant que Son Khalif-Sultan et sa Ville Éternelle resteront sous la domination et [l']occupation étrangère[s].

L'Assemblée Suprême Nationale m'a fait l'honneur de me charger de porter à la connaissance de Votre Excellence la protestation énergique de ses membres contre cet acte arbitraire et contraire aux stipulations de l'Armistice qui a, une fois de plus, confirmé la nation ottomane dans son pessimisme sur le résultat de la Conférence [sic] de la Paix. Le parlement, sanctuaire sacré et reconnu comme tel par toutes les nations civilisées, a été violé en plein[e] séance; du sein de la Chambre les représentants de la nation ont été enlevés par la police anglaise comme des malfaiteurs malgré les vives protestation [sic] de la Chambre; des sénateurs, des députés, des généraux, des hommes de lettres ont été arrêtés dans leurs domiciles avec des menottes aux mains et déportés; enfin nos établiss[e]ments officiels et privés furent occupés par la force des baïonnettes en se basant simplement sur le droit du plus fort.

Le peuple ottoman, vu la violation de tous ses droits et l'atteinte portée à sa souv[e]rain[e]té a, par l'ordre de ses représentants réunis à Angora, élu un Comité Exécutif du sein même de l'Assemblée, qui a pris de suite en main le gouv[er]nement [sic] du pays.

En soumettant à Votre Excellence ce qui précède j'ai l'honneur de vous communiquer les désidérata de la nation exprimés et adoptés à la séance du 23 Avril, 1920.

1. Constantinople siège du Khalifat-Sultanat ainsi que le gouvern[e]ment de Constantinople est considéré par la nation ottomane comme prisonnier des Alliées [sic] et par conséquent les ordres et les Fetvas émanants [sic] de Constantinople occupée, ne peuvent avoir aucune valeur légale et religieuse et tous les engagements contractés par le soit[sic]-disant gouvern[e]ment de Constantinople sont considérés par la nation comme nuls et non avenue.

2. La nation ottomane tout en gardant son sang-froid et modération est résolue à défendre ses droits sacrés et plusieurs fois séculaires comme état

¹ A minute on the file records that this note 'reached Lord Curzon direct'. A copy of a similar note, addressed to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, was to be received on June 10 as enclosure in Constantinople despatch No. 755 of May 25, not printed.

libre et indépendant, et déclare son désir [sic] pour la conclusion d'une paix équitable et honorable tout en ne recon[n]aissant qu'à ses propres envoyés le droit de prendre des engagement[s] en son nom et pour son compte.

3. L'élément chrétien [sic] ottoman ainsi que les éléments étrangers établis dans le pays, restent sous la sauvegarde de la nation; cependant ils ne doivent rien entreprendre contre la sécurité générale de la Patrie.

Dans l'espoir d'un accueil [sic] favorable aux justes réclamations de la nation ottomane, je prie Votre Excellence de vouloir bien agréer l'assurance de la haute considération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être, de Votre Excellence, le plus humble et dévoué serviteur.

Au nom de l'Assemblée Suprême Nationale Ottomane et par son ordre
Le Président de l'Assemblée
MOUSTAPHA KÉMAL

No. 59

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir R. Webb (Constantinople)

No. 406 Telegraphic [E 6335/56/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 5, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 526 (May 1st.¹ Reshid Bey's views.)

The best advice that can be given to the Turkish Government is that now that peace terms are settled they should swallow their medicine as quickly as possible and then set to work to put in order such Empire as is left to them in which task they may look for British guidance and support. You should speak to them in this sense when an opportunity occurs.

¹ Not printed. In this telegram Reshid Bey (cf. No. 32), now again Minister of the Interior and a member of the Turkish Delegation which left Constantinople for Paris on May 1 to receive the terms of the peace treaty, had stated that 'settled policy of present Government was that future Turkish State should rely on Great Britain for support. There would doubtless be some British military or civil officer attached to Delegation in Paris. He would like to have such intimate relations with this officer as would enable Delegation and himself personally to know views and wishes of British Government for their guidance.'

No. 60

Admiral Sir R. Webb (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received May 11, 9 p.m.)

No. 565 Telegraphic [E 4570/3537/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, May 11, 1920, 1 p.m.

Your telegram No. 406.¹

I took an opportunity afforded by visit to Grand Vizier on May 10th to speak in sense indicated but for reason given in last paragraph of this telegram I gave what I said formed simple conversation (? with apology for)² expression of my own views.

¹ No. 59.

² It was suggested in the Foreign Office that the text here should read 'as'.

I found Grand Vizier very depressed over peace prospects. He spoke as though (? he) were now between two minds as to whether Turkish Government could assume responsibility for signing Treaty ceding to Greece Smyrna, and whole of Thrace, especially as Government would be assuming responsibility which strictly speaking could only be borne by Parliament.

He adverted to possibility of Nationalists in Europe proclaiming independence of Eastern and Western Thrace combined; and to declaration of Nationalists in Asia that they would never accept treaty of kind foreshadowed in recent disclosures, which declaration he said had been embodied in telegram from Angora to Peace Conference.³

Grand Vizier asked what might be expected to happen if Turkey did not sign peace. He said that if he knew this, it might help him to prepare way for acceptance and to spare his country from fresh disaster. I said I had no information as to intentions of Supreme Council, but that my own feeling was that, logically, armistice had only two possible ends, viz., peace or resumption of hostilities.

He asked whether draft Treaty presented on March [? May] 11th would admit of attenuation, or would be the last word of Supreme Council. I again expressed ignorance, but said I thought no attenuation would be looked for unless Turkish Delegation could produce new factor and I could not personally conceive of existence of any factor which had not been fully considered by Council when drafting Treaty.

He asked whether time allowed to Delegation for reply would admit of submission of Treaty to Sultan and other authorities here.

I said that precedents led me to think that sufficient time would be allowed for this purpose.

Early in conversation Grand Vizier renewed suggestion made by him on previous occasion that Turks could readily sign Treaty if they had some assurance that Great Britain would secure revision in their favour eventually as they did after Treaty of San Stefano.⁴ I naturally said that I could not give him the smallest (? encouragement) . . .⁵ French and Italians did not want to deprive Turkey of places inhabited by Turks. He quoted recent utterances of M. Barthou⁶ and especially M. Nitti,⁷ and said that if policy of Allies of His Majesty's Government was what these utterances indicated His Majesty's Government themselves could surely assent to it. I pointed out that Draft Treaty could alone be taken as reflecting policy of Allies, representing as it did joint production of prolonged deliberations of their responsible statesmen. I confess, however, that I was somewhat embarrassed by citations from M. Nitti's speech.⁸

³ Not traced in Foreign Office records. Cf. No. 64 below, para. 5.

⁴ This treaty of March 1878, which had ended the Russo-Turkish War, had been revised at the Congress of Berlin, June-July 1878.

⁵ The text is here uncertain.

⁶ President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber. Cf. Vol. VIII, No. 14, minute 4 and n. 3.

⁷ Italian President of the Council.

⁸ In the Foreign Office it was suggested that the reference might be to Signor Nitti's speech in the Italian Chamber on March 22 giving a statement of the policy of his new administration; see *The Times*, March 23, p. 13.

I also felt some uncertainty as to whether your telegram under reference was intended as definite message to Turkish Government implying that His Majesty's Government expect and intend to play in this country after peace rôle different from and more paternal than that of other Allies. I should be grateful for any further guidance Your Lordship could give me on this last point.

No. 61

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received May 12, 10.20 a.m.)

No. 568 Telegraphic [E 4614/56/44]

PARIS, May 11, 1920, 11.20 p.m.

Turkish conditions of peace were formally handed to Turkish Delegation this afternoon and, acting on your instructions, I represented Great Britain. President of the Council made a very short speech pointing out that owing to Turks' action the war had been prolonged and many lives lost, and Allied Powers were determined to prevent any recurrence of military action on the part of Turks. He informed Turkish Delegation that they would have a month in which to consider the terms. All objections or observations they might make were to be communicated in writing.

Head of Turkish Delegation confined himself to acknowledging the receipt and saying that terms of peace would have the earnest and immediate attention of Turkish Government.

No. 62

Sir A. Geddes (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received May 12, 3.50 p.m.)

*No. 336 Telegraphic [E 4645/56/44]**

Very confidential

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1920

I hear on what appears to be reliable authority that President and Secretary of State are extremely desirous of forcing United States to undertake mandate for Turkey [? Armenia] and to participate, but this is less sure, in control of Dardanelles and Bosphorus. I am informed that they have asked ex-Ambassador Gerard¹ to suggest means of effecting this without reference to Congress, and have confidentially approached Caldwell and other members of Republican Committee who are interested in Middle East to assist them in carrying out their plan over the heads and in teeth of opposition of both Senate and House of Representatives.

There is to be a meeting here in Washington in a few days' time, provisionally fixed for 18th May, at which President and Colby will meet Gerard and certain Republicans to elaborate the scheme, if any is found to be feasible. I understand officials of State Department are being kept in entire ignorance of this project.

¹ Mr. J. W. Gerard had been U S. Ambassador at Berlin, 1913-17.

I send you this information, but President's course, if he pursues this line of approach, is so closely surrounded by difficulties, which appear to be insurmountable, that it would, in my opinion, be unwise to count upon his obtaining any results in external affairs. It may be that the whole movement is for internal political effect.²

² Lord Curzon minuted: 'I do not believe it. C.'

No. 63

Sir A. Geddes (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received May 17, 11.40 a.m.)

*No. 364 Telegraphic [E 4892/56/44]**

Secret

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1920

My telegram No. 336 of 11th May.¹

I have secured drafts of the proposals to be considered at the meeting held on 18th May.

First draft (abbreviated):—

Question: Can method be devised for extending governmental aid to Armenian people without delay and obstacles apprehended from Congressional action?

Proposals are: State Department to open negotiations with representatives of Armenian Republic and with representatives of Cilician Armenians to secure contract.

To supply and deliver arms, munitions of war, railway and other supplies, including money or credit, *via* a given seaport to a given interior point. United States to reserve right to safeguard delivery to destination and to supervise use of supplies through commissioner.

Armenian Government to afford right to United States escort to pass and re-pass pending execution of contract.

Then United States to despatch to Black Sea transports with these supplies with necessary marines for escort after landing; transports to be convoyed by warships.

Next notify Supreme Council that, despairing of Turkish Government's good faith, while United States Government is not able to accept mandate formally, it is willing to render friendly aid and support to Armenian Republic and its nationals, in whatever province they may now be found, also advising Council of expedition and saying President accepts duty of fixing boundaries.

At the same time make following declaration to Sublime Porte: 'Until boundaries of Armenia are defined and her ultimate territory allotted, United States Government, as friend of the Republic, will view with grave concern and as an unfriendly act any aggression upon Armenian nation, and will hold Turkish Government responsible for any forces within the territories claimed by it.' This being done, land supplies and escort; also send,

¹ No. 62.

if agreed, officers to train and develop Armenian army; also provide transport for Armenians in United States to Armenia either to serve in Armenian forces or participate in constitutional conventions; finally, appoint staff of military officers with power to veto aggressive military action on the part of the Armenians.

Simultaneously in United States organise public opinion to force the Congress to make the necessary appropriations to carry on.

Second draft: For consideration of (? commercial interests, ? boundary line) and concerned with forms of notifications to Allied Powers, alternatives as follows:—

(a) United States Government, having recognised Armenia, feels it has a peculiar interest in its citizens, and could not be justified in regarding with indifference a single attempt to oppress them or deprive them of their independence.

(b) United States Government regards arbitrators of Armenia as occupying a peculiar position and as possessing peculiar claims to friendly consideration of all Christian Powers. It will at all times be prepared to interpose its good offices to prevent any encroachment by republic upon any just right of any nation, and it will be very unwilling to see it despoiled of its rightly acquired territory or improperly restrained in the exercise of its necessary rights and powers.

Men that I know to be primarily responsible for these drafts are Hamilton, Holt and Caldwell. They are working in close touch with Gerard and Morgenthau.² In addition, Hoover, Taft and Elihu Root³ seem to be in the movement, but how far they are familiar with details I do not know.

On the Government's side I am informed that the matter was discussed at the last meeting of Cabinet and that final decision was reserved until after meeting of 18th May. There is, I think, little doubt that oil situation will be of some importance in final decision, idea of controlling Batoum being clearly attractive to certain interests here.

If I am approached, am I authorised to say that His Majesty's Government would welcome participation of United States in work of restoring and maintaining stability of Government and social order in Armenia, even if at present it is impossible for United States Government to accept a mandate under League of Nations?

I still think Administration will have great difficulty in carrying out any such scheme.

Names of men concerned, however, form such an extraordinary combination that it is difficult to estimate possibilities. It is still possible that the whole movement is part of the internal political game.

² Mr. H. Morgenthau had been U.S. Ambassador in Turkey, 1913-16.

³ Mr. H. Hoover, candidate for Republican nomination for the Presidency; Mr. W. H. Taft, Republican President, 1909-13; Mr. Elihu Root, Secretary of State, 1905-9.

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received May 17, 8.15 p.m.)

No. 596 Telegraphic [E 4890/3/44]*

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, May 17, 1920, 1.30 p.m.

Reception of peace terms, so far as they are yet known here, has been calm. Tone of Turkish press in Constantinople is one of extreme depression. There is so far no note of defiance, but hope is expressed that Conference may still be induced to modify conditions, which are stated to be not only unfair to Turkey, but inimical to future tranquillity.

Public meeting is being arranged to take place during next few days, but precautions are being taken to ensure orderliness and moderate language.

Everything so far is based on very incomplete summaries of treaty. These are conflicting on various points.

I could have wished to receive full and authoritative summary from Foreign Office to enable me to control other sources of information.¹

I must warn you against drawing any inference as to what will happen in Thrace or Anatolia from calmness displayed here. News arrives very slowly from Anghar [Angora], but course of events there up to about 3rd May is now definitely known. National Assembly convoked by Mustafa Kemal met about 23rd April, and assumed all powers, both legislative and executive. Executive powers were delegated to Government also presided over by Mustafa. Assembly passed various resolutions, including one formally denying competency of any persons except delegates to Peace Conference appointed by Assembly itself to take any decision regarding destinies of Turkey. Steps were taken to communicate decisions of Assembly to Governments of Europe, America and Soviet Russia.²

Anghar Assembly is reported to have already appointed so-called Peace Delegation, including Ahmed Riza, Ghalib Kemaly and Ahmed Rustem Billinsky, all of whom are in Europe. This, however, lacks confirmation.

Central Government is, of course, quite without power over Nationalists at Anghar and over bulk of Asia Minor; Anghar maintains touch with certain persons in Constantinople, who may serve as link between Nationalists and elements here who have hitherto opposed Nationalists, but whom drastic nature of peace is likely to throw into their arms.

Grand Vizier continues to manifest utmost depression, but I think he is awaiting text of treaty before taking any line.

¹ A note on the file, dated May 18, reads: 'Copies of the Treaty have been sent from Paris by Mr. Vansittart and direct from F.O. so he will shortly have the text.'

² Cf. No. 58.

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No. 65

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 446 Telegraphic [E 4617/1729/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 17, 1920, 8 p.m.*

My telegram No. 383, to which no reply has been received.¹

French Ambassador has addressed to me a complaint² that preponderance given to British element in the three commissions is cause of misunderstanding.

He recalls that at San Remo British Government assured French Premier that presidency of the three commissions would be entrusted to three Allied officers.³

He hears to-day that War and Post Commissions are under British presidents, while the Marine has no president, and steps are taken regarding movement of Turkish troops and ships without the commissions being consulted.

Reply urgently if facts are as stated by French Ambassador.

¹ Of April 27, not printed. Cf. No. 69 below.

² Dated May 11, not printed. Cf. No. 47.

³ Cf. Vol. VIII, No. 2, minute 2.

No. 66

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

*No. 465 [E 4938/39/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 17, 1920*

Sir,

The Italian Chargé d'Affaires had asked to see me this afternoon with regard to our refusal at the last moment to sign the tripartite agreement between Italy, France and Great Britain concerning the zones of economic preference in Asia Minor.¹ He pleaded strongly, on behalf of Signor Nitti, that we should still sign.

I admitted quite frankly that I had told him, a week ago, that I was prepared to accede to this course; but I explained to him that, when I did so, I had acted upon imperfect information. I had not then seen the final text of the agreement, and I had thought that we were bound by the engagements entered into at San Remo to sign and publish it at an early date. Under this misapprehension, I had given my assent. When, after seeing him, I had received and perused the final text, I had discovered in article 11 that the agreement was not to be published or to come into force until the Treaty of Peace with Turkey made by the three contracting Powers came into force also. In other words, the publication and execution of the agreement could not take place until the Turkish Treaty was ratified, which might not be for several months from now.

¹ For this projected agreement see Vol. VIII, No. 19.

In these circumstances I asked Signor Preziosi what was the point or the advantage of signing now? From the Italian point of view I could conceive of no advantage whatsoever, unless Signor Nitti desired to have the Parliamentary advantage of stating or letting it be known that he had obtained this *quid pro quo* for the promises made in the Treaty of London.²

Signor Preziosi denied that it was required for this purpose, or that any publicity at all would be given to the signature of the agreement.

I said that I could not reconcile this with the extreme anxiety which Signor Nitti had betrayed in San Remo and elsewhere. He had not concealed in any way that he wished to point to the *fait accompli*, as a vindication of his very earnest and successful defence of the interests of his country. I added, however, that, whether Signor Nitti did or did not observe Parliamentary silence, the fact of signature must at once leak out. It would be known, if not at once, at any rate in two or three weeks' time, that a document of some sort had been signed. In these circumstances publication would be forced upon us, and I could not imagine anything worse from the point of view either of Italy or of France, who were the two Powers particularly affected by the agreement. It was certain, as I had often pointed out at the Conferences in London and in San Remo, that the arrangement would be severely criticised. It would, in all probability, excite the vehement hostility of President Wilson and of American public opinion, though the British Government would be less exposed to such attack because they were the one party who had nothing to gain by the agreement. Further, the Turks would at once be up in arms against a proposal which might render their signature of the Peace Treaty more difficult even than it was already likely to be. In these circumstances, signature at this moment appeared to me, from the point of view of expediency, to be the very worst move that either the Italian or any other Government concerned could make.

There was, I said, an additional reason against signature at this juncture. It was certain that the Turkish delegates to Paris would make strong representations for the modification of the terms of the Treaty of Peace, and, if any such modification were considered, it might involve an alteration of the terms of this agreement, to which accordingly it would be much better if the signatures of the contracting parties had not previously been affixed. In the other alternative, the Turks might decline to sign the Peace Treaty altogether, in which case the tripartite agreement would fall to the ground and the act of signature would turn out to have been a folly.

From all these points of view I argued to the Italian Chargé d'Affaires that my second thoughts had been the better, and that his Government would be well advised if they desisted from applying any pressure in the matter.

He then changed the subject, and asked me if I would instruct the British High Commissioner in Constantinople to assist the Italian company in opening operations at the Heraclea coal-mines, which, by the tripartite agreement, were to be handed over to them by the French.

² For the text of this treaty of 1915 see Cmd. 671 of 1920.

I enquired whether the Italian company was already in existence or whether it was a new body proposing to take advantage of the arrangement about to be concluded.

He told me that he believed it to be the latter.

In these circumstances, I suggested to him that it would be the height of imprudence to give away the nature of the agreement in advance by endeavouring to secure its advantages before even it had been signed. I thought that the Italian Government would be wise if they curbed their anxiety with regard to the acquisition of coal from Asia Minor for a little longer, unless, indeed, they could procure or work a concession in the ordinary course of business, as to which I could offer no opinion. The matter was not one, however, in which I could possibly ask the British High Commissioner to intervene.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

No. 67

Sir A. Geddes (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received May 19, 12 noon)

*No. 373 Telegraphic [E 4984/56/44]**

WASHINGTON, May 18, 1920, 1.58 p.m.

In continuation of my telegram No. 364 of 16th May,¹ I have been asked by the Secretary of State to-day if Allies thought projected arrangements with regard to control of Constantinople and narrow waters satisfactory. I replied that I believed they regarded them as best of series of bad possibilities which alone were left after America's unwillingness to assume responsibility became known. He then asked me if I thought Supreme Council would reopen question if America were prepared to assume responsibility for Constantinople. He asked, further, if retention of the nominal Turkish sovereignty in Constantinople were desirable, and volunteered the opinion that it would be harmless if Sultan remained there as religious personage. I understand directly from Secretary of State that the President is in favour of America assuming the responsibility for Constantinople as well as Armenia.

United States Government is obviously still doubtful if it can do what it desires to do in (? Armenia) without the consent of the Congress.

They are probably now engaged in attempt to estimate strength of opposition.²

¹ No. 63.

² Lord Curzon minuted: 'If the Americans were now to take a mandate for Constantinople (which is in my judgment not at all likely to be offered to them) the Peace Treaty would have to be entirely reconstructed since there are many of its conditions which they would never accept. I regard this idea as a chimæra. If on the other hand they were disposed to take on either Armenia or Caucasasia I should witness with a grim delight their dealing with those States when in the hands of Soviet Governments. C. 20/5.'

No. 68

Earl Curzon to Sir A. Geddes (Washington)

*No. 465 Telegraphic [E 4892/56/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 21, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 364 of 16th May.¹

If approached, you should emphatically declare that His Majesty's Government would warmly appreciate American co-operation in support of the Armenian Republic with a view to ensuring its stability.

¹ No. 63.

No. 69

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received May 25)

*No. 621 Telegraphic [E 5239/1729/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, May 24, 1920

Your telegram No. 446 of 17th May.¹

Reply to your telegram No. 383 of 27th April² was held up pending my return from Malta.

Full statement of divergence of views between my French and Italian colleagues and General Milne on the subject of the three control commissions is given in my telegrams Nos. 276 and 277 of 24th March³ and in my despatch No. 2864 of 27th April.⁴

As agreed to by Allied High Commissioners pending instructions from their Governments, controls continue working in accordance with conditions required by General Milne (my telegram No. 277).

The War Office and Post and Telegraph Commissions are accordingly under presidency of British officers. At Ministry of Marine there is no president, and, in point of fact, senior Allied officer there is a Frenchman. General Milne is now prepared to hand over post and telegraph control to one ally if I hand over Admiralty to another. In that case, however, he declines all responsibility for former, as officer appoint. . . .⁵

I cannot . . .⁵ that, whilst we are still in state of war with Turkey and in military occupation of Constantinople, and unable to foresee result of communication of peace terms, there should be no possibility of interference with or weakening of authority of Supreme Allied Commander, General Milne, who is responsible for military situation to His Majesty's Government and to Supreme Council.

To ensure this it is necessary that both War Office and Post and Telegraph

¹ No. 65.

² Not printed.

³ See No. 30, and No. 30, n. 3.

⁴ This reference should read 'No. 608 of 27th April'; the despatch is not printed.

⁵ The text is here uncertain.

Commission should, as at present, be under presidency of British officers directly responsible to General Milne. As regards Admiralty, the present arrangement works satisfactorily, and any change would be to our detriment (see my telegram No. 439 of 26th April).⁶

Commissions at War Office and Admiralty are kept fully informed regarding movements of troops and ships. What neither General Milne nor I can admit is that junior Allied officers on these commissions should have it in their power to interfere with arrangements which we may consider it necessary to make arising out of political, military or naval situation.

I can only suggest that danger and impossibility, under present unsettled conditions, of divided authority should be pointed out to French Ambassador, and that it should be made clear that present separation of commissions is only practical measure, however much such organisation may be modified on conclusion of peace, when various commissions of control will presumably be responsible to Supreme inter-Allied authority.

French and Italian members of the War Office Commission definitely informed by President that they were in no way under General Milne's orders—an impossible position for General Milne.

⁶ Not printed.

No. 70

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir R. Webb (Constantinople)

No. 471 Telegraphic [E 5066/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 26, 1920, 11 p.m.

Your Despatch No. 629 of 5th May.¹

Admiralty telegram 859Z of 6th April to Commander-in-Chief² concurred in proposal that Allied men-of-war should be stationed at all coast towns with object of giving security to Christians in interior and Commander-in-Chief was instructed to make dispositions accordingly after consulting with his Colleagues.

¹ Not printed.

² Not traced in Foreign Office archives. Cf. No. 39, n. 4.

No. 71

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 630 Telegraphic [E 5122/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 2, 1920, 8 p.m.

I am informed¹ that the French are about to withdraw from Cilicia, and have advised the Armenians to come to terms with the Turks.

Please ask French Government at once what are the facts.

¹ In a letter of May 19 to Mr. Vansittart from Mr. Forbes Adam, a member of the British Peace Delegation in Paris, reporting an interview on the same day with Boghos Nubar Pasha, President of the Armenian National Delegation to the Peace Conference.

No. 72

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

No. 236 Telegraphic [E 5506/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 2, 1920, 8 p.m.*

High Commissioner, Constantinople, telegraphs a request¹ by the Sublime Porte for extension to 11th July of time for reply to the peace terms.

Please suggest to Italian Government that this request should be concurred in.²

¹ In his telegram No. 631 of May 28, not printed. The Allied High Commissioners recommended the acceptance of this request.

² Lord Curzon in his telegram No. 632 of June 5 to Paris (not printed) instructed Lord Derby to make a similar suggestion to the French Government. Eventually an extension was granted of fifteen days until June 26. A Turkish appeal for a further fortnight was rejected on June 21 at the First Conference of Boulogne at Lord Curzon's instance (see Vol. VIII, No. 33, minute 3.)

No. 73

Sir G. Grahame (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received June 4, 10 a.m.)

No. 657 Telegraphic [E 5835/3/44]

PARIS, *June 3, 1920, 8.30 p.m.*

Your Lordship's telegram No. 630 June 2nd.¹

Secretary General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs informs me that there is no question of French withdrawing from Cilicia. One or two small exposed posts are being evacuated for military reasons.²

¹ No. 71.

² In his telegram No. 676 of June 7 (not printed) Lord Derby reported a further conversation that morning with M. Paléologue who had confirmed that French troops were being drawn in from outlying posts, as they were dangerously exposed. He added that 'French have no intention whatever of evacuating districts of Mersina, Tarsus, Adana, Osmanie and Aintab. Reinforcements are being sent there, mostly, I gather, colonial troops, and all should have arrived by beginning of July'.

No. 74

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 4, 4 p.m.)*

*No. 651 Telegraphic [E 5872/1729/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *June 3, 1920, 9 p.m.*

General Milne informs me that Military Attaché, Rome, telegraphs of the advent of Italian division in Constantinople area.¹ Further, Italians are anxious to acquire zone on Asiatic side of Bosphorus. This presents serious

¹ A copy of this telegram, No. 1792 of May 17 to the War Office (not printed), was received in the Foreign Office on May 28.

problem to us politically, in view of present Italian activities and methods. After consultation with Milne, I consider efforts should be made to get Italians to take over Asiatic side of Dardanelles and southern shore of Sea of Marmora as far as Panderma, with headquarters at Chanak until such time as peace is signed. Though open to objections, it is least dangerous. This would leave French in Gallipoli, Italians retaining two battalions in Constantinople as they do at present. His Majesty's ships would give necessary support in Straits. Reasons against Italians taking over section on Asiatic side of Bosphorus are obvious. It would at once weaken our position both politically and militarily, excepting Constantinople. British troops hold Ismid peninsula and bar Nationalist advance to Haidar Pasha. Should this occupation pass to Italians that security vanishes. There are many other military objections, of which doubtless Milne will inform War Office.

No. 75

Sir G. Grahame (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received June 4)

*No. 663 Telegraphic [E 5870/3/44]**

Very secret

PARIS, June 4, 1920

Reference my telegram No. 661 of 4th June.¹

I have seen President of the Council.

Following is true statement of case, but please treat it as very confidential.

French troops were in very precarious situation and one battalion at Biridjik (?) was completely surrounded, and Gouraud² said he could not assist them, Feisal having refused him any facilities for military purposes over railways, and there was every fear that they would be massacred.³

M. de Caix, passing through Angora on his way home, saw Mustapha Kemal, and agreed with him for a suspension of hostilities for twenty days, during which it is hoped French battalion will be able to make a safe retirement.

President of the Council said there was no other alternative to course now pursued.

¹ This telegram (not printed) reported an announcement in the *Écho de Paris* on June 4 to the effect 'that M. Robert de Caix, Secretary General to French High Commissioner in Syria, signed five days ago armistice with Mustapha Kemal'.

² French High Commissioner in Syria and Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Levant.

³ See enclosure 1 in No. 254 below. The Emir Feisal, son of King Hussein of the Hedjaz, had been proclaimed, in March 1920, King of Syria by an Arab Congress at Damascus; see below, No. 219.

No. 76

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 4, 10.12 p.m.)

No. 654 Telegraphic [E 5874/3/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 4, 1920, 2.30 p.m.

My despatch No. 732 of 22nd May.¹

Admiral Le Bon² informs me, and French High Commissioner confirms, that General Gouraud has arranged for armistice with forces of Mustapha Kemal, lasting twenty days and beginning midnight 31st May to 1st June.³

Further, it appears that General Gouraud sent envoy to Mustapha Kemal, pointing out that, as French did not intend to retain Cicilia [*sic*], he did not wish for further bloody fighting for a country in which French [? no longer] interested themselves.

¹ Not printed.

² Admiral de Bon, Commander-in-Chief, French Mediterranean Fleet.

³ Cf. No. 75.

No. 77

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 506 Telegraphic [E 5441/3/44]*

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 5, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 628 of 27th May.¹

Following is reply of His Majesty the King to the Sultan of Turkey:—

‘I have received Your Majesty’s appeal of 27th May. The future of Turkey is in the hands of the Allied Governments, who have devoted long and patient effort to the construction of an equitable Treaty of Peace, and who may be trusted to act with justice to all parties and interests concerned.’

¹ Not printed. This was an appeal from the Sultan of Turkey to H.M. the King ‘to intervene with other Entente Powers in order, to alleviate the severity of the treaty in those of its clauses which are incompatible with independent State, and to save from partition at least the Turkish-speaking provinces’.

No. 78

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 11, 3 p.m.)

No. 681 Telegraphic [E 6301/3/44]*

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 10, 1920, 8.35 p.m.

My telegram No. 666 of 7th June.¹

Grand Vizier has now decided positively to leave by sea for Marseilles on 12th June. He should reach Paris about 19th June.

¹ Not printed.

2. He paid me farewell visit on 9th June. He again made urgent appeal for revision of peace terms in sense which would leave to Turkey all areas in which Turkish language predominated. He covered same ground, to great extent, as in conversation reported in my telegram No. 627² and my despatch No. 766 of 27th May.²

3. Grand Vizier prefaced his remarks by assertion of his conviction (which had been confirmed by what passed in Paris last year and by statements of Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour) that Allies did not hold Turkish dynasty or people responsible for Turks' entry into the war, and that they contemplated peace of justice, not of punishment.³

4. As regards Thrace, he invoked statistics which, according to him, showed undoubtedly Moslem majority. He said that he did not wish to reopen question of area between Karasu and Maritza, although it contained 1,000,000 Moslems, as against 300,000 non-Moslems of all kinds, and although Peace Conference had, he declared, laid it down last year that this area would share fate of Constantinople. He did urge Turkey should retain the country east of Maritza, where majority was also Moslem, and Adrianople, with which Turkey had so many ties.

5. He added nothing new about Smyrna, but once more insisted that majority of population in that area were Moslem.

6. As regards Armenia, he complained that Turkey was asked to commit herself to a frontier not defined in treaty, and to do this in regard to region in which 95 per cent. of population were Moslem.

7. He again deprecated creation of straits zone, which would be in effect the only sovereign State between Sultan and his dominions in Asia. He urged object of securing free straits could be fully obtained by occupying both sides of straits only and maintenance at sea of as many naval units as Allies chose.

8. Grand Vizier said he would not trouble me with more technical details, which he hoped would be thrashed out in commissions in Paris. He passed to more confidential statements, gist of which was as follows:—

9. Even if Turkey obtained mitigation of peace terms, which he had suggested, she would be so utterly weak internally and so surrounded by hostile neighbours that she could not long subsist unless she had a strong supporting hand. Would England hold out that hand, and would he have means when in Paris of conveying his views to English statesmen?

10. I told Grand Vizier to arm himself with all statistics and data he could, as he would find statisticians at the other end who had gone very deep into the question of population raised by him. I pointed out that his suggestion regarding straits would involve maintenance of large naval forces in these waters at a moment when all the Allies were anxious to reduce armaments of this kind. Essential purpose was, I said, to make waterway absolutely secure, and to achieve this it would be necessary to occupy every part

² Not printed.

³ These references are uncertain, but for a memorandum by Mr. Balfour and statements by Mr. Lloyd George see, e.g., *F.R.U.S. The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, vol. v, pp. 669–72 and 756–7. Cf. also Vol. IV, Appendix II to No. 278.

of the littoral from which it would be threatened by gun-fire. I admitted risk of such threat was small in view of disarmament of Turkey, but said that Allies were on their guard, not against people like himself, but against people of the type of Enver Pasha and Talaat.⁴

11. Speaking quite personally, I asked whether he was ready with any proposals which would give Turkey access to Anatolia by excluding from straits zone some port, like Ismid or Panderma, to which my gun-fire argument would not apply. Grand Vizier persisted in his view that his first suggestion would guarantee all that was necessary, but said that if it could be agreed to in principle that separate zone extending from Dardanelles to Black Sea was unnecessary, detailed solution could be worked out by technical experts.

12. I said I could not even express opinion as to prospect of future support from England, but promised to report all he had said to your Lordship.

13. Grand Vizier urged illusoriness of hope that stable equilibrium could be created by peace now contemplated. England no doubt wanted durable peace, but lesson of history was that Greece could never hold on to great possessions. She had held them under individual great men, but when those men passed away Greece lost her grip in Asia and in Archipelago. In Europe Greece was under perpetual threat from Slavdom.

14. What would happen, he asked, if Sultan and Government made up their minds to sign treaty whatever it might be and Thrace and Anatolia went into revolt? I parried this by saying it would be hard to know whether Thrace was in revolt against Sultan or at war with Greece. He said Thrace had hitherto listened to him, but attitude of leaders there was that they would withdraw their obedience to Central Government if Central Government proved incapable of defending them. Central Government would only defend them by argument, and if Greeks crossed Maritza leaders in Thrace would consider Central Government had failed. Thrace would then be at war with Greece.

15. I said Conference had doubtless envisaged every possibility. They had certainly told Greeks what they had to undertake.

Grand Vizier asked eagerly whether Greeks had been told not to invade Thrace before signature of peace. I said they could not do so without good authority from Conference.

⁴ Pro-German leaders of the Young Turks' Committee of Union and Progress, Enver Pasha and Talaat Pasha had fled to Germany upon the conclusion of the armistice between the Allied and Turkish forces in Oct. 1918.

No. 79

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 11, 10 a.m.)

No. 682 Telegraphic [E 6269/3/44]*

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 10, 1920, 10 p.m.

General Milne informs me that Turkish troops in Ismid area who are loyal to Government have now declared their inability to maintain their present

positions and have expressed their intention of withdrawing. This will leave British troops at Ismid face to face with National forces, whose avowed intention is to advance to Bosphorus.

One of the main reasons for military occupation of Constantinople by Allies was to put a stop to Nationalist activities in capital and surrounding districts. For our troops to withdraw from Ismid now and to allow the Ismid peninsula to pass under control of Nationalists would render our position in Constantinople impossible with Nationalist forces on or near Asiatic shore of Bosphorus.

Further, the Ismid district is well within area which is to be demilitarised and controlled under terms of Peace Treaty. Any retirement of our troops from Ismid to a line further back would be most undesirable and a clear sign of weakness. I have accordingly requested General Milne to take steps to prevent any of Nationalist forces from coming into Ismid or Ismid peninsula, and to fix a line west of which any Nationalist troops will be fired upon if they advance.

I am arranging for navy to give support to our troops and to control waters of Ismid and northern shores of Ismid peninsula towards Shile.

The maintenance of our control of Ismid peninsula is a matter which is as much in interests of French and Italian[?]s as in our own. General Milne estimates that he requires at least a division in Ismid peninsula should Nationalists carry out their intentions.

It is therefore most necessary that French and Italians should take their part by providing their quota of troops required. The French should co-operate by sending a force to Ismid, to be under General Milne's orders there, to show that Allies are agreed as to policy, and Italians by taking over Asiatic side of Dardanelles, as proposed in my telegram No. 651 of 3rd June,¹ and thus releasing British troops now stationed at Chanak.

I would represent most strongly that matter is one of extreme urgency, and it is absolutely necessary that definite orders should be given by His Majesty's Government if it is the intention that we should retain our position in occupation of Constantinople.

¹ No. 74.

No. 80

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon¹

No. 683 Telegraphic [E 6335/56/44]

Secret and personal

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 10, 1920¹

In the course of conversation reported in my official telegram No. 681² Grand Vizier insisted greatly on his desire to secure British support for the future Turkey.

On my speaking in general sense of your private letter,³ which had reached

¹ The date and time of receipt and time of despatch are not recorded.

² No. 78.

³ Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

me just before, he said only hope for this country and only means of preventing evil elements from coming uppermost as they had done before was to change order of succession; to bring up young Prince who would become Heir Apparent, on sound British lines; by once more making reliance on England basis of Turkish policy as it had been for 100 years.

Grand Vizier's request for facilities for communicating confidentially with British statesmen was similar to that made by Reshid Bey and reported in my official telegram No. 526.⁴ He had previously told Ryan that Colonel Blaker who was attached to his delegation last year was of recent German origin and that his appointment had been criticized in the press on that ground; and he suggested desire to parry such criticism had made Colonel Blaker too scrupulous in repeating everything he had said to French and Italians. Grand Vizier asked whether as direct contact with British statesmen was impossible he could not have some Officer through whom he could say things which could not be divulged even to his own colleagues in the delegation. I do not know whether there is any idea of peace terms being substantially modified at last moment nor do I know what rôle Great Britain desires to play in affairs of the future Turkey. If by any chance terms are to be modified and if Great Britain aspires to leading rôle here in the future, it seems to be most important that modification should be represented as concession to Sultan obtained through Prime Minister now identified in popular mind with policy of reliance on Great Britain. This would enhance the prestige of Sultan who will be the best instrument to use in the future and will enable moderate elements in the country to be mobilized round him, leaving in small minority extremists who hate us and who are irreconcilable. From point of view of impression on our own Moslem subjects also this would be best form to give any concessions as humiliation of Sultan as Caliph is principal cause of dissatisfaction of Indian Moslems with peace terms in their present shape.

⁴ See No. 59, n. 1.

No. 81

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 14, 9.50 a.m.)

No. 701 Telegraphic [E 6402/3/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 13, 1920, 6.20 p.m.

Your telegram No. 460 of 20th May.¹

Grand Vizier has put forward several proposals for the formation of a force, of varying numbers from 7,000 to 50,000 men, to be used to suppress national movement in Anatolia.

General Milne considers that Peace Treaty should be signed before authorisation be given for the formation of such a force.

Have informed my French and Italian colleagues of his opinion.

¹ Not printed.

No. 82

Sir G. Grahame (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received June 15, 10 p.m.)

No. 712 Telegraphic [E 6527/3/44]

PARIS, June 15, 1920, 7 p.m.

In the course of a conversation today the Secretary General of Ministry for Foreign Affairs expressed strong doubt as to whether Turkish Government would ever sign treaty of peace (? and he is) practically certain that French Chamber would not ratify it as it stands.

No. 83

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 16, 10 a.m.)*

*No. 706 Telegraphic [E 6541/3/44]**

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 15, 1920, 11.30 p.m.

At the present moment we are actively engaged in hostilities with Nationalist forces at the Gulf of Ismid. It is not a satisfactory military position for various reasons, but I have had to urge on General Milne how desirable it is for us to hold the Gulf of Ismid. Further retirement towards the Bosphorus will . . .¹ our position in Constantinople increasingly difficult and might become impossible. It is obvious, if we are to retain control here and carry through Peace Treaty, our army must be strongly reinforced immediately.²

¹ The text is here uncertain.

² For Gen. Milne's account of the fighting in the Ismid area, see his despatch of Aug. 11, 1920, printed in 4th Supplement to *The London Gazette*, Jan. 4, 1921, pp. 164-5. This despatch reviewed the action taken by Gen. Milne and his troops between the signature of the armistice with Turkey and the signature of the Turkish Peace Treaty on Aug. 10, 1920.

No. 84

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 16, 10 p.m.)*

*No. 708 Telegraphic [E 6579/3/44]**

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 16, 1920, 8 p.m.

In view of serious situation, following appears [*sic*] to be points for immediate decision by His Majesty's Government:—

We are already fighting Turkey; are we to continue a new war observing that Peace Treaty has united practically all Turks?

If we are to have a new war, strong army reinforcements are immediately required. In any case, a considerably larger force than that now at General Milne's disposal is required to ensure safety of Constantinople and Straits.

In order to relieve pressure in that area, should Greek army at Smyrna attack Turks and advance on Panderma?

It must be understood that if we intend to occupy area on either side of Straits set forth in Peace Treaty, it will now require a largely increased army to retain and hold.

Advance of Greek troops will probably mean further massacres of Christians in Anatolia, but if they are not used there appears to be no reason why a large Nationalist concentration against us in Ismid peninsula should not take place at once.

No. 85

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 555 Telegraphic [E 6402/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 16, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 701 of 13th June.¹

I agree that signature of Peace Treaty should precede authorisation for formation of force advocated by Grand Vizier.

¹ No. 81.

No. 86

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received June 18, 11.30 a.m.)

*No. 713 Telegraphic [E 6721/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 17, 1920, 8.30 p.m.

Following is translation of identic telegram which my colleagues and I have decided to send to our Governments:—

‘The High Commissioners of France, Great Britain and Italy, informed by naval and military authorities of very serious situation resulting from forward and offensive movement of Nationalist forces in the directions of Constantinople and Dardanelles, have conjointly examined possible consequences of this situation, particularly from political point of view, and have decided to address to their Governments following identic telegram:—

‘1. Constantinople is threatened from side of Asia, perhaps shortly from side of Thrace, and may see its commercial relations and its food supply compromised, if not interrupted, on side of Dardanelles. The Allied forces are insufficient to ward off all these dangers.

‘2. Yet Allies must at all costs remain masters of Constantinople and the Straits.

‘The High Commissioners therefore urgently support the proposals of naval and military commanders, particularly in regard to immediate despatch of considerable reinforcements.

'3. The High Commissioners note that action of Nationalist forces was set in motion, just as they had foreseen, immediately that peace conditions became known, and that nature of these conditions had made nearly all Turks Nationalists.

'4. In these conditions, it becomes more than ever necessary to consider whether Turkish Delegation will sign treaty, and to consider, moreover, what that delegation actually represents. In any case, the Allies are from to-day on under necessity either of employing force to impose their will, and even to maintain themselves in Constantinople, or of introducing substantial modifications into treaty.

'5. The approach of Kemalists, and their military successes, may have as their consequence provocation of a movement of their partisans at Constantinople for the overthrow of present Government, the Chief of which is absent,¹ and substitute a Nationalist Government in its place. In this event, ought High Commissioners to suppress such a movement and maintain Government of Damad Ferid by force, or ought they to restrict themselves to maintenance of order and allow events to take their course (*laissez-faire*)?

'6. In the former case, the façade of Government, which is all that exists to-day, runs the risk of collapse, and Allies would then be under the obligation of taking Government and administration into their own hands. In the latter case, the High Commissioners find themselves in the presence of a Government representing a party which is declared rebellious, and which has already opened hostilities against Allied troops at several points.

'7. The High Commissioners are of opinion that the former attitude should be adopted if Allied Governments desire to uphold treaty and are resolved to despatch the necessary forces immediately; and that latter should be adopted if Governments are not prepared to undertake a new war against Turkey, and entertain possibility of modifying certain clauses of treaty, notably those dealing with territorial questions.

'8. The High Commissioners desire especially once more clearly to expose this dilemma; the first alternative being a breaking off of armistice and renewal of war; the second being an inevitable change of attitude and opening of negotiations for maintenance of treaty. These negotiations would be begun under disadvantageous conditions, in consequence of strength of Nationalist organisation, the successes with which their forces have already met and the difficulty of proceeding to disarmament of Turkey.

'9. The High Commissioners beg their Governments to inform them of their intentions, and to send them identic instructions with as little delay as possible.²

¹ See No. 78 above.

² Lords Hardinge and Curzon minuted as follows:

'My personal opinion, as I have already explained to the S. of State, is that a Turkish Govt. should be formed composed of the present Govt. and representatives of Mustapha Kemal on the understanding that there shall be a revision of the Treaty of which the principal point shall be the complete evacuation of Asia Minor—(the French intend to evacuate Cilicia). A further condition would be a readjustment of the question of Thrace by negotiation. Under such conditions it is possible that a treaty might be concluded and

signed. The opportunity presents itself for putting forward such a proposal in the presence of Damad Ferid in Paris. I know however the objections to this policy, which have been explained to me by the S. of State, but my conviction is that if there is not revision now, one will be forced on us in a few months' time.

'In the meantime I hear from M. Cambon that the Kemalists are at Gebse, a station on the Ismidt line opposite Prinkipo, and a cavalry raid on Scutari and Haidar Pasha is expected. H.'

'The Cabinet favour the alternative policy of a military concentration to hold the Ismid Peninsula and repel Mustapha Kemal. C.' Cf. Vol. VIII, No. 26, minute 1.

No. 87

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris) and Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

*No. 722¹ Telegraphic [E 6269/3/44]**

Most urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 21, 1920, 12.10 p.m.*

Admiral de Robeck's telegram No. 682.²

French and Italian Governments will certainly agree that any weakening in face of Nationalists in or near the Capital would be fatal to Allied policy.³ We would urge them therefore to furnish their High Commissioners and Military Commanders with all instructions necessary to insure the co-operation of French and Italian troops in the defence of the Ismid Peninsula and in preventing the Nationalists from endangering our position in Constantinople. We also trust that they will send such reinforcements as General Milne may find necessary for his purpose in accordance with the suggestion contained in the penultimate paragraph of above-mentioned telegram.

(Repeated to Constantinople, No. 559.)

¹ No. 722 to Paris; No. 265 to Rome.

² No. 79.

³ See Vol. VIII, No. 33, minute 2.

No. 88

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received June 23, 3.30 p.m.)

No. 732 Telegraphic [E 7092/3/44]

Clear the line

CONSTANTINOPLE, *June 23, 1920, 1.10 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 559 of June 21st:¹

Whilst provision of military reinforcements in order to maintain our position against Nationalists is matter of most urgent necessity (My telegram No. 708 June 16th)² I wish to point out serious difficulty with which General Milne is confronted.

In the meantime Italian Government have been urged to instruct their civil and military authorities here to ensure co-operation with French and Italian troops in defence of Ismid peninsula and further to supply reinforcements required by General Milne. The relations which exist between Italian[s] and Nationalists are of so equivocal a nature, and frequent [*sic*] visits of Italian officers and others to Nationalist leaders in Anatolia are so

¹ No. 87.

² No. 84.

openly directed against common interests of Allies that from a purely military point of view presence of Italian troops in Ismid area might constitute a grave danger to our forces by transmission to enemy of military information as to forces and dispositions.

Also although attitude of French authorities here is perfectly loyal and correct, French officers and others have undoubtedly been in relationship with Nationalists and have worked against British.

As we are now in open hostilities with Nationalists it is essential in my opinion that our allies should absolutely cease to have any communication officially or unofficially with enemy and that categorical order should be given by French and Italian Governments for withdrawal of their officers and agents who are present in areas under Nationalist control.

No. 89

Sir G. Buchanan (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received June 25, 10.45 p.m.)

*No. 264 Telegraphic [E 7230/3/44]**

ROME, June 23, 1920, 5 p.m.

I yesterday addressed note to Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, embodying your telegram No. 265 of 21st June¹ and Constantinople telegram No. 682 of 10th June.²

As Minister for Foreign Affairs has not yet returned from Boulogne,³ I to-day called on President of Council, and, after impressing on him gravity of situation and urgency of immediate action, expressed earnest hope that Italian Government would co-operate with us and at once send troops to take over Asiatic side of Dardanelles.

President of Council said that he fully realised Italy was as much interested as we were in maintenance of their rôle at Ismid peninsula, and that any indication of weakness on the part of Allies might seriously prejudice the position of their forces in Constantinople. Anxious, however, as he was to co-operate in this, as in other questions, with His Majesty's Government, he could not at present moment spare any troops for such a purpose.

I urged in matter of such grave importance it hardly became Italy to stand aside altogether, and that all that General Milne had asked for was that she should send enough troops to the Dardanelles to enable us to transfer British troops who were now at Chanak to Ismid. He said he had at present at his disposal, to meet all eventualities, only some 300,000 men, and he required them, and indeed more than these, to deal with situation in Albania and Tripoli and to maintain order at home, more especially as threatening attitude of railwaymen, if not kept under control, might end by cutting off several important towns from food supplies. It was case of *force majeure*, and he regretted exceedingly his inability to comply with our request.

(Repeated to Constantinople.)

¹ No. 87.

² No. 79.

³ For the First Inter-Allied Conference of Boulogne, June 21-22, see Vol. VIII, Chap. V.

No. 90

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received June 23, 11.50 p.m.)

*No. 752 Telegraphic [E 7091/3/44]**

PARIS, June 23, 1920, 8.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 722 of 21st June: Ismid peninsula.¹

I have received following reply from President of the Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs, to representations which I made in accordance with your instructions:—

'French Government recognise necessity of defending Ismid peninsula against Nationalists. It is also ready to maintain closest co-operation between Allies in Turkey against Nationalists' attacks.

'But it considers intermingling of British, French and Italian troops presents great inconvenience and difficulties, not only from point of view of command, but also of supplies. It considers it necessary to maintain homogeneous detachments and to divide defence of Constantinople into sectors both on Asiatic and European side. In its opinion it would be practical and logical that defence of Ismid peninsula and of Bosphorus on Asiatic side should be concentrated in hands of British troops, and that defence of Constantinople on European side be ensured by French troops. This would seem the more logical, since command of General Milne in Asia has been formally agreed by France, and since, from point of view of right as well as in accordance with proposals repeatedly made by French Government, command in European Turkey should be French.'

The President of the Council insists on fact that he is anxious to maintain close co-operation between Allies in resistance to Turkish Nationalists, and that his reply is solely inspired by anxiety to ensure such resistance under safest and most homogeneous conditions.

President of Council would like to know views of His Majesty's Government as soon as possible, in order that he may lose no time in sending most urgent instructions to Constantinople.

¹ No. 87.

No. 91

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received June 24, 9.20 a.m.)

*No. 736 Telegraphic [E 7156/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 23, 1920, 10.20 p.m.

My telegram No. 734 of 23rd June.¹

Reshid Bey and Jemil Pasha² called on me this morning, 23rd June. They

¹ Not printed. This had reported the High Commissioners' receipt of a note from the Porte asking them to exercise their good offices to secure a further fifteen days' extension of the limit of time within which to reply to the Allied peace proposals. Cf. No. 72, n. 2.

² Ministers of the Interior and of Public Works respectively, and members of the Turkish peace delegation to Paris.

said that, thanks to preparatory work done in Paris, drafting of Turkish reply by Government here had not involved much labour, and that draft reply had now assumed form so nearly final that it would be easy to put finishing touches to it with Grand Vizier at Paris. They took line that granting further extension of time was foregone conclusion.

They said that they had intended to leave on 26th June, but that steamer for Venice was not now expected to leave before 28th June.

I urged importance of their starting at earliest moment, and, as it happens to fit in with other arrangements, I offered accommodation as far as Taranto in H.M.S. 'Caradoc', sailing 26th June.

Delegates expressed hope that Turkish Government's objection to present draft treaty would be considered indulgently. I said that I could not disguise cooling effect likely to have been produced on any sympathy for Turkey felt in England by recent unprovoked attack on our troops at Ismid by so-called National force. I pointed out that observers at a distance must find it difficult to discriminate between Central Government and Nationalists, when latter have started warlike operations against us within stone's throw of capital. I added that Nationalists were not only operating in Asia Minor but also in Paris, where every effort was being made to persuade Allied public opinion that Mustafa Kemal and his associates alone stood for Turkey.

I said that best thing delegates could do was to get quickly to Paris and satisfy Allies that legitimate Government of Turkey have no connection with Nationalists, who are our avowed enemies, and that delegation really represents Sultan and his people and not rebels against his authority.

Delegates denounced Nationalists with utmost fervour, but urged strongly that Turkey should be given just peace, and one likely to assure her future stability. This, they said, could only be assured by placing her under ægis of single Power, and England was the only Power qualified to fill necessary rôle of guide and protector. They did not expect England to undertake task from purely disinterested motives, but at least her motives would not be local economic ones. They would be founded on her interest in regenerated Turkey as element of order and stability in the East generally.

(Secret)

My offer of transport to Taranto and my language generally were inspired by knowledge that Reshid has since returned here, being engaged in intrigue against Ferid Pasha, and strong suspicion that for some time past he has been tending towards collaboration with Nationalists for peace treaty purposes. Object of intrigue against Ferid is to reduce him to nullity in peace negotiations and perhaps to force his resignation. Game of Nationalists appears to be capture of peace delegation, in subordinate ranks of which they have strong sympathisers.

French have also hand in this game. Reshid Pasha is probably sincere in belief that Great Britain is only Power really capable of helping Turkey, but he is on most intimate terms with French, who dislike Ferid, and who would be glad to see Reshid in his place. Latter might be specially convenient

instrument in their hands if pro-Nationalist element in high French circles gain ascendancy, as they seem increasingly likely to do, and succeeded in giving new orientation to French policy in Turkey on lines of establishing understanding with Mustafa.

No. 92

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 741 Telegraphic [E 7091/3/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 25, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 752 of the 23rd June.¹

Please convey following as personal message from Prime Minister to President of the Council:—

'I have given careful consideration to your proposal to divide military control in the Constantinople area, and have consulted my military advisers on the point. They point out that, according to every military rule, there must be unity of command in the operations which are now being conducted against the Turks, and which may take place both north and south of the straits. To divide arbitrarily forces into two commands on either side of a line, which, in a military sense, is purely imaginary, would be opposed to all principles of strategy, and would be to deprive ourselves of the advantages of the central position. Further, the base for our operations on the Ismid Peninsula is, and must remain, Constantinople. This in itself would appear to preclude the practical working of your proposal. Finally, supposing the Turks made a general attack and it were accompanied by some kind of rising in Constantinople, I can conceive of no arrangement more calculated to produce confusion, delay, and possibly disaster, than that in the small common zone which we actually occupy there should be two commands and no Commander-in-chief. There might be even three, for if there is to be no unity of command the Italians would also probably claim an independent command. It is, therefore, impossible for the British Government willingly to give their consent to the abandonment of the principle of unity of command in the Constantinople area.

'The only question, therefore, is whether that command should be British or French. I am most anxious to say and do nothing in this matter which could cause misunderstanding, and I would assure you that the British attitude in this matter is not in the least concerned with prestige or political influence. But I must point out that almost the whole burden of the war against Turkey was borne by the British, that the majority of the troops engaged in this area are still British, and that the troops most liable to serious attack are also British. Further, I would remind you that the British agreed to a French Commander-in-chief both on the Western front and on the Salonica front during the war, and that large British armies loyally accepted

¹ No. 90.

and worked this arrangement. I think therefore that it is only reasonable that the French Government should now agree, seeing how strong the other reasons are, to there being a British Commander-in-chief during the present operations. I do not wish to have to meet the criticism in Parliament that unity of command is always interpreted to mean that British troops must be placed under French command, and that it does not mean that French or Italian troops can be placed under British command. I would, therefore, earnestly ask the French Government to take a big view of the situation and agree to there being unity of command in the Constantinople area, and to the supreme command being exercised by a British General until peace with Turkey is established. The French Government, of course, under this arrangement would have a voice in the selection of the General who was to have the supreme command, and if they agreed to my proposal the British Government would consult with them on that subject immediately.'

No. 93

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris) and Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

No. 742¹ Telegraphic [E 7092/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 26, 1920, 3 p.m.*

Constantinople telegram No. 732.²

In view of situation which has arisen at Ismid and hostilities forced on the Allies by Nationalists we presume French and Italian Governments will immediately withdraw all officers and agents who are now in areas under Nationalist control and in official or unofficial communication with Nationalists.

We regard this as being of extreme importance if Turks are to believe in reality of our policy and we would urge Government to which you are accredited to take necessary action without delay.³

Repeated to Constantinople No. 578.

¹ No. 742 to Paris; No. 275 to Rome.

² No. 88.

³ In his telegram No. 776 of June 30 (not printed) Lord Derby reported that M. Millerand agreed and had 'notified Minister of War with a view to necessary instructions being sent to Constantinople'. In Rome telegram No. 279 of June 28 (not printed) the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs was reported to have told Sir G. Buchanan that there was only one Italian agent, named Fago, left in Nationalist-controlled areas. It had been decided to recall him, but the Government reserved to themselves the right of sending an agent at an opportune moment to negotiate the release of Italian prisoners in Nationalist hands.

No. 94

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 26, 9 p.m.)

No. 751 Telegraphic [E 7274/3/44]*

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, June 26, 1920, 4.30 p.m.

General Milne has shown me a telegram from War Office which states that M. Millerand has proposed that French should assume entire military control over Constantinople on behalf of Allies, whilst General Milne should, as hitherto, be responsible for Asia Minor.¹

I would point out that acceptance of this proposal would mean that our predominant position at Constantinople as Power which defeated Turkey in war, made armistice and executed military occupation of town this year, would be sacrificed, and that French would take our place and play leading rôle.

We are now at war with Turkish Nationalists, and have in addition to ensure execution of terms of Peace Treaty. If we hand over Constantinople to French we give up control of place, which is strictly only possible base for all military and naval operations in Turkish area.

We should also resign to French our present predominant position in being able to influence the Sultan, Turkish Cabinet and Sublime Porte. We are the Power which is determined to execute Peace Treaty in spite of Nationalists; our French Allies may, however, at any time decide that a policy of compromise with Nationalists is more in accordance with their interests. They have been in communication with Mustafa Kemal, and have made an armistice with him in Cilicia.² If they controlled Constantinople they would be in a position to bring in a Nationalist Government here, which would create a situation making execution of present Peace Treaty impossible.

I can see no advantage to Allied cause in M. Millerand's proposal, and its only object appears to be to establish French in position of predominance in Constantinople at our own expense.

The argument in favour now put forward, viz., that separate areas of command are necessary to ensure Allied occupation, is diametrically opposed to contention previously maintained that General Milne was in supreme command of Allied armies in Orient.

¹ For this proposal see No. 90.

² See No. 75.

No. 95

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 581 Telegraphic [E 6721/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 26, 1920, 10 p.m.

Your telegram No. 713, Paragraph 5.¹

You will have realized from my telegram No. 559,² repeating my telegraphic request to French and Italian Governments for reinforcements, that

¹ No. 86.

² No. 87.

our policy would require forcible suppression of any political developments in Constantinople tending to strengthen the Nationalist movement in Anatolia and Thrace.

No. 96

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received June 27, 4.50 p.m.)

No. 770 Telegraphic [E 7340/3/44]

Very urgent

PARIS, June 27, 1920, 12.20 p.m.

My telegram No. 768 of 26th June. Command in Turkey.¹

Following is summary of reply of President of Council.

'French Government fully concur in necessity of unity of command for future Military operations in Constantinople zone. In taking view in its note of January [June]² 23rd that for reason of command and supply it would be preferable to maintain homogeneous forces in fixed sectors, it did not exclude the idea of unity of command but advocated that solution in principle for employment of troops while admitting that a certain liberty in this respect should be left to various commands.

'Unity of command being thus recognised question arises as to troops over which it should be exercised. Without considering for the moment naval forces French Government considers it clear that it should be exercised over Greek army (about 100,000 men), British troops (about 30,000), French troops (about 18,000) and Italian troops (about 2,000).

'As regards question whether Supreme Command should be French or British, French Government observe that by right France held supreme command by land and sea since beginning of the war although certain local . . .³ were temporarily made at time of occupation of Constantinople and conclusion of Armistice with Turkey. Last decision taken as regards Land Command was that of December 3rd 1918 in London, which laid down that 'British troops in garrison in any part of Turkey whatsoever remain with their General under command of General Franchet d'Esperey.'⁴ In point of fact, in spite of that decision, General Wilson assumed command at Constantinople and, more recently, General Milne that over whole of Constantinople Zone, although his command had been restricted by Allies to Asia Minor.

'British Government,' continues President of the Council, 'now ask France to abandon her right of Supreme Command in Turkey in Europe, basing that demand on a situation of fact and actual respective military positions in Constantinople district and asserting that that demand is in no way influenced by political considerations.

'French Government, anxious to reply to British demand and to take

¹ Not printed. In this Lord Derby had given it as his private opinion that M. Millerand would refuse the proposal put forward in No. 92.

² See No. 90.

³ The text is here uncertain.

⁴ See Vol. IV, No. 518.

arguments put forward into account, is ready to agree to Supreme Military Command for defence of Constantinople Zone being entrusted to an English General, but only on certain conditions.

'French parliamentary and public opinion will be unable to admit that existing rightful situation at Constantinople should be reversed to the detriment of France without equality which ought to exist between British and French at Constantinople being at the same time maintained and clearly laid down. Logically if command by land is attributed to England, command by sea should be French.

'Should such a solution be considered hardly practical, French Government asks that under Supreme authority of British General, command of town of Constantinople itself be entrusted to a French General. Further French Government asks that at Constantinople question of Presidency of three commissions of control, which should be divided amongst British, French and Italians by agreement between their respective Governments shall now be definitely settled in that sense.⁵

'Situation,' concludes President of the Council, 'will then be as follows: General Officer Commanding-in-Chief will settle military objections⁶ to be attained in accordance with political aims decided upon by Council of High Commissioners. British Commander-in-Chief would direct military operations. The two Governments would settle between themselves on choice of General for the purpose. In principle troops of same nationality will remain grouped together without entirely binding hands of Supreme Command in that respect; each of the General Officers Commanding troops of different nationalities will retain right to refer to his Government if he considered that his forces were endangered by orders received.

'Such is basis on which French Government consider that cordial co-operation and close agreement between the Allies should remain established.'⁷

⁵ Cf. Nos. 65 and 69.

⁶ Corrected in the Foreign Office to 'objectives'.

⁷ In a minute on the file Lord Hardinge remarked: 'The Prime Minister will have a word to say in this matter.' Lord Curzon underlined 'a word' and added 'Several C. 29/6'. Foreign Office telegram No. 748 of June 29 to Paris transmitted a message from the Prime Minister to Lord Derby asking him to thank M. Millerand for his reply 'and tell him that as we are to meet on Friday next [July 2] at Brussels I think it will be the simplest course to postpone a settlement of the arrangements till then'. For later developments, see Nos. 167, 188, and 205 below.

No. 97

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 9, 1.30 p.m.)

No. 795 Telegraphic [E 7988/3/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, July 8, 1920, 10.25 a.m.

Greek Commander-in-Chief has informed General Milne that he has received orders from M. Venezelos [*sic*] to proceed at once to effect military occupation of Eastern Thrace and to transfer troops from Asia Minor for the

purpose. He asks General Milne to request me to co-operate with British men-of-War in landing of these Greek troops at Rodosto.

This proposal of Mr. Venezelos is, I think, most rash and ill advised.¹ Thrace is at present perfectly quiet and nationalists there are giving no trouble. Once the Nationalist opposition in Asia Minor has been (? repulsed) Thrace can be occupied without difficulty, and it is impossible that Nationalists there will show much opposition in view of their ill successes in Anatolia.

But at present situation in (? Asia Minor) is not clear and operations are in progress. The Nationalist (*sic*)² forces have been driven before Greek advance but only a relatively small part of Asia Minor has been occupied and we cannot foresee what action Mustafa Kemal may take, what further forces he may dispose of, and whether Turkish population will remain quiet under Greek occupation. Any set back suffered by Greeks in Asia Minor would have most serious effect, would revive Nationalists' hopes and go far to destroy effect of success hitherto obtained. Until situation is defined a reduction of Greek forces in Asia Minor is therefore unwise.

Addressed to Foreign Office, who is requested to inform Admiralty, repeated British Delegation, Spa.

¹ In his immediately following telegram No. 796 of the same date (not printed) Admiral de Robeck suggested that 'present plan may have been proposed by General d'Esperey in hope that Greeks (to whom we alone and not French are lending Military and Naval support in Turkey) may overreach themselves. In that case a situation would arise which French would turn to their advantage and to detract from our present predominant position here.'

² Thus in filed copy.

No. 98

*Earl Curzon (Spa)*¹ to *Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)*

No. 643 [E 8098/1435/44]

SPA, July 10, 1920

Sir,

During the Conference at Spa I had more than one conversation with the Italian Foreign Minister, Count Sforza, concerning the independent, and in some cases scarcely loyal, attitude pursued by Italian officials, military officers and agents in almost every part of the Near and Middle East. From every quarter, I said, information reached me of Italian intrigues with the Turkish Nationalists, Italian dissociation from Allied policy and interests, Italian attempts to make things difficult for Allied and, in particular, British forces, representatives and actions. From a confidential report which had recently come into my hands from Constantinople I extracted a number of specific incidents, of which I undertook to furnish Count Sforza with a more detailed résumé.² But from my own knowledge and recollection I was able to refer him to examples of the sort of conduct of which I thought I had good

¹ Lord Curzon attended the Inter-Allied Conference at Spa from July 5-16, 1920.

² This résumé and Lord Curzon's covering letter to Count Sforza, dated July 10, are not printed.

reason to complain in the Caucasus, at Constantinople and more particularly in Egypt.

On two separate occasions, in London and at San Remo, the Italian Prime Minister had promised to send an Italian battalion to reinforce the British garrison at Batoum,³ which at that date it was an object of interallied policy to hold, at any rate provisionally. The French had carried out a similar undertaking, but the Italians had twice failed to redeem their pledge. At Baku the different treatment meted out to the Italian representative by the Bolsheviks as compared with the British and French, and more particularly the British,⁴ was an indication of the separate relations which the Italians were known for some time to have established with the revolutionary party. At Constantinople the independent attitude of the Italians was so notorious that it was a matter of common belief that the Alliance no longer existed, and the British Commander-in-Chief was reluctant to make use of Italian troops in the military crisis that had recently arisen because of his uncertainty as to their inclinations.⁵ Everywhere the Italians were reported as assuring the Turks that they were behind them in resisting the Turkish Peace Treaty, while in Anatolia we were credibly informed that Italian agents were in close touch with the partisans of Mustafa Kemal.⁶

I said to Count Sforza that I could understand a policy of this description, which might or might not be inspired by a regard for Italian interests, provided it was pursued by an independent, a neutral, or a hostile Power. But I could not understand it, so long as it was pursued by a member of the Alliance which had fought and won the war, which had continued since the war to meet the other Allies in friendly conference, and which had only a few weeks ago on Italian soil drawn up the Peace Treaty with Turkey, against which the majority of these manœuvres appeared to be directed. As long as the Alliance continued—and I was not aware that the Italians either desired or proposed its rupture—it seemed to me that the Allies were bound by the obligations of a common loyalty to adhere to that policy, not only in the persons of their Ministers and principals in Europe, but of their agents in all parts of the East.

Did the Italians, I asked, formally and seriously object to the terms of the Turkish Peace Treaty? Many reports had reached me to that effect, both at London and later at San Remo; and when we went to the latter place the British Delegation had been led to expect that a serious attempt would be

³ Cf. Vol. VII, No. 27, minute 2, and Vol. VIII, No. 13, minute 2.

⁴ Cf. Vol. XII, Chap. V, Nos. 571 and 572.

⁵ Cf. No. 88.

⁶ On July 1 a memorandum had been handed by a Foreign Office representative to the Italian Ambassador in London on a report of a speech made in May by the Italian General Porta to local Nationalist leaders in Turkey in which the General was said to have used the following language: 'The war has had the disastrous result of leaving Great Britain the Supreme Power in the world. This apparent supremacy is misleading. Though she appears to be at the zenith of her power she is, in fact, tottering to her fall and it is the duty of Islam to undermine her power and cast her down. The Italians are working to re-establish Germany in Europe as a balance to Great Britain. It is the duty of all Moslems throughout Asia and Egypt to work for the same end.'

made by Italy to modify its conditions in respect more especially of Smyrna and Thrace. It was true that Signor Nitti had made a brief fight, or rather had raised some doubts, about the decision concerning the Chatalja lines, and had shown no marked enthusiasm for the Smyrna solution. But the Italian attitude had not been pushed to the point of opposition, and the treaty in its present form had been finally accepted by them, not only without protest but with unqualified assent. Did the Italian Delegation, I asked, adhere to this position, or were they even now at Spa about to press for modification?

Count Sforza admitted that his Government had felt, and continued to feel, very serious doubts about the Thracian and Smyrna policy of the Allies, but he did not anticipate that it would now be possible to modify it, and he accordingly accepted the obligations of loyalty to a policy which he admitted to be equally binding upon his Government with the remaining Allied Powers.

Upon the other issues raised by me, Count Sforza was constrained to admit that, though explanations might be forthcoming in individual cases, there was probably some justification for the complaint that I had made. He explained the situation, somewhat naïvely, as having arisen from a far-sighted desire on the part of Italian agents and representatives in the East to anticipate the situation which they contemplated would shortly arise in that part of the world. In their judgment the Nationalist forces in Turkey would be in the ascendent in the future, and it was politic therefore, with a due regard to Italian interests, to be on good terms with that section of the Turkish community. Even now at Constantinople the Italians would welcome a situation in which by some means we could persuade the Nationalist Party to join in the acceptance of the Peace Treaty. Further, the Italians were animated by a traditional suspicion of the Greeks, who were even now doing much to provoke them in Asia Minor, and in these circumstances it was not surprising that Italian agents should sometimes in distant parts carry their feelings to a point that was not in strict accord with the policy being pursued by their superiors in Europe.

Count Sforza assured me that he did not himself in any degree countenance these proceedings, and he promised to issue instructions that would produce a more loyal atmosphere and attitude.

Upon the position in Egypt and the conduct of the Italian colony there I spoke with even greater warmth. The Italians had over and over again during the past two years promised to recognise the British protectorate over Egypt—a recognition which I believed had not yet been forthcoming. Meanwhile we had made enormous concessions to the Italian ambitions in Africa. We had ceded to them a great slice of territory in Jubaland, and had even added to the original cession. We had further accommodated them about Sollum. In these circumstances it was really intolerable that in almost every communication that came from Egypt I should find mention of Italian intrigues with the Nationalist Party and Italian hostility.

One of the chief centres of this mischievous influence in the East was the

Banco di Roma, which appeared everywhere to be a focus of anti-British agitation, and evidence of whose activities reached me from many quarters.

Count Sforza assured me that he was greatly concerned by what I had told him. He proposed to hold up the return to Egypt of the Italian representative, Count Negretti, until he had seen him on his own return to Rome. He was convinced that no such charges would be brought against the Count, to whose friendliness and British sympathies many spontaneous tributes had been made; he proposed to give Count Negretti strict instructions to place a much needed check upon the political proclivities and proceedings of his compatriots in Egypt.

Count Sforza appeared throughout our conversations to be animated personally by most friendly intentions, but he made no great effort to disguise that his countrymen were not always similarly imbued.⁷

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

⁷ In his despatch No. 590 of July 29 (not printed) Sir G. Buchanan reported that, in an interview on the previous day, Count Sforza had told him that since his return to Rome he had gone into the whole question of the attitude of Italian officials in the Near and Middle East and that 'so far as he had been able to ascertain they were the result of gossip, such as was always current in the East, and had no foundation in fact'.

No. 99

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 18, 4.45 p.m.)

*No. 829 Telegraphic [E 8431/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, July 17,¹ 1920, 4.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 652.²

Ferid Pasha and Peace Delegation returned here on 14th July.

Reshid Bey is only plenipotentiary remaining in Paris.

Ferid Pasha called on me this morning, 16th July. He said he wished to represent to me results of his journey without entering into details, which I already knew. Turkey, he said, was confronted with treaty of utmost severity, only alternative to signing which must be total ruin. This was realised by reasonable people like himself, but unfortunately country was full of irresponsible madmen, who took line that treaty was death sentence, and that Turks should not put rope round their own necks. These people clamoured against signature, and fixed their hopes on support of Islamic world and Bolsheviks.

Grand Vizier said that recent attack on British at Ismid³ (for which as head of Government he expressed regret) had shown what lengths rebels would go to, and had proved correctness of his often-repeated contention

¹ This telegram was drafted on July 16.

² Of July 12, not printed. This had informed Admiral de Robeck of the Allied draft reply to the Turkish observations on the Peace Treaty. For the discussions at the Spa Conference on these observations, see Vol. VIII, No. 47, minute 1, and for the Allied reply, *ibid.*, No. 62, minute 1 and Appendix I.

³ See Nos. 83 and 86.

that they were enemies not alone of Turkish Government, but also of Great Britain.

It was not only here, he said, that wild ideas prevailed. In Paris he had been beset by all sorts of Asiatics, who spoke in same strain as opponents of signature here. He himself realised fantastic nature of hopes founded on Islamic and Bolshevik support, but people who entertained them were numerous. What then, he asked, would be the value of treaty which was going to impose all sorts of obligations on Turkey if signed by Government, whose duty it would be to discharge these obligations honestly and loyally, but who would be incapable of doing so? He did not wish to exaggerate strength of movement in the interior. He agreed with me that failure of Kemalists to put up any resistance to Greek advance showed how little hold they had, how sick and tired peasants were of war, and how ready they were to welcome peace from any quarter.

He had maintained last year that movement was bluff, and had made proposals for repressing it with small expenditure of force, failing which grave situation would arise. He had not been listened to, and grave situation which he foretold had come about. Even now, however, position was such that if Greeks were ordered to Angora, or even Sivas, advance would be military promenade and trouble would not be encountered until they approached Erzeroum.

While taking this unexaggerated view of movement in Asia Minor, Ferid Pasha nevertheless insisted on seriousness of situation which would arise if peace were signed without any guarantee that Government who signed it would be able to enforce their views on extremists.

If Government remained in their powerless condition they might be swept away, though it was difficult to say whether their fall would follow or precede moment fixed for signature of peace.

Grand Vizier thus led up to usual appeal for British assistance in retrieving situation in Asia Minor, and he summed up his attitude as follows:—

Reasonable men saw there was no alternative to signature except destruction. Reasonable men from Sultan downwards would plump for signature if they knew Great Britain would help Government to restore order in Turkey after signature. If, however, they were not assured of such help, even reasonable men would be against signature.

I promised to report all this to your Lordship. I urged repeatedly great importance of signing lest even worse fate would befall Turkey. I pointed out that peace itself contemplated creation of instruments, e.g., gendarmerie, which would be forged with Allied assistance and would be available for restoration of order. To this Grand Vizier retorted that these instruments could not be brought into existence until Kemal had first been repressed.

Grand Vizier said he had explained above views, though in less detail, to Lord Derby, who had telegraphed to Prime Minister and had been summoned same day to Conference with latter at Spa.⁴ He had not been able

⁴ Lord Derby attended the meeting of the Spa Conference held on the morning of July 11; see Vol. VIII, No. 62.

to see Lord Derby on his return to Paris, but he had himself also given Prime Minister written statement of his views as far as they could be reduced to writing in form of letter.

Impression derived from this conversation and preliminary conversation with Mr. . . .⁵ is that Grand Vizier personally has resigned himself to signature and is trying to convert others to this view. There is distinct movement of opinion in this direction, but it is to a large extent confined to one political group, namely, *Entente libérale*. This detracts from its value. Ferid Pasha will probably have to reconstruct Government in any case within a few days. If he does so on programme of signing peace and recruits Cabinet mainly from *Entente libérale*, it will challenge violent opposition.

Sultan is beset by opposing influences. He probably leans towards signature, and it is probably in order to confirm him in this that Ferid is so anxious to be able to promise British support afterwards.

There is talk of convening Crown (*sic*) Cabinet as soon as rejoinder of Supreme Council to Turkish answer has been officially received, but no decision has been taken.

⁵ The text is here uncertain.

No. 100

*Memorandum on the release of Turkish prisoners at Malta by Mr. Fitzmaurice*¹

[E 10303/37/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 21, 1920

These deportees were mostly arrested by the Turkish Government and, owing to the inadequacy or unsuitability of Turkish prison accommodation, were entrusted to us for custody. Thus on general grounds they cannot be released without the consent of the Turkish Government.

They have been identified with the Pro-German war regime in Turkey and consequently with the Kemalist Nationalists, whose resistance to, and obstruction of the carrying out of the Peace terms prolongs their period of detention.

Their release now, if—to suppose the impossible—the present Turkish Government consented, would lower the prestige of the latter and decrease its ability, such as it is, to help towards the execution of the Peace terms.

Even our advocacy of such release would have a similar effect and would be interpreted in Turkey as a victory for the Anti-British Kemalists, and a serious moral blow to the existing Sultan's Government which desires to co-operate in the fulfilment of the Peace conditions.

These considerations apply with greater force to inside members of the Committee of Union and Progress, like RAHMI BEY, who though calculatingly generous in his treatment of the British Colony at Smyrna, was violently Anti-Greek. His release now by us would be construed at

¹ Member of the News and Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office.

Constantinople as heralding the defeat of Damad Ferid Pasha and the undoing of the Peace Conference's decisions as to Smyrna and Thrace.

'The Turkish deportees have been divided into several categories, e.g. those guilty of outrages on British prisoners of war, of obstructing or violating the Armistice terms, of outrages on Greeks and Armenians, etc. etc. They have also been classified as (A) those who should be retained in custody on general repatriation, and (B) those who may be released on general repatriation. The list of (B), given in the High Commissioner's despatch No. 335 of March 14th [11th] 1920,² contains practically nobody of real political value, e.g. for exchange against Allied hostages detained by the Nationalists. The idea of such exchange would seem to presuppose the impotency to deal effectually with the Kemalists and enforce the Peace terms. As regards list (A), of 64 Turks now detained at Malta, the High Commissioner strongly recommends that they should be retained in custody 'because the return of any of them would be most inexpedient until after the Treaty of Peace is in force.'

The War Office (Sir A. Sinclair) in a letter of June the 17th 1920² quotes the opinion of the Secretary of State for War 'that the expediency of releasing several of our less guilty and less hostile Turkish prisoners should be considered lest we are compelled to release in the fi[r]st instance the most guilty and the most hostile in exchange for British Officers and men captured by the Nationalist forces.' The Foreign Office wrote to the High Commissioner at Constantinople on June the 28th in its despatch No. 486 to elicit his opinion as to whether certain of those Turkish prisoners 'believed to be favourably inclined to Great Britain should be released'.² To this no reply has yet been received.

As those who could have any conceivable political value must belong to Class (A), it is not to be anticipated that the High Commissioner or the present Grand Vezier [*sic*] can be favourable to their release until after the conclusion of Peace. The burden and cost of these deportees, less than a hundred in the two categories (A) and (B), will be considerably decreased as soon as the Sultan's Government is put into a position to enforce the terms of Peace against the opposition of the Nationalists, with whom these deportees have been identified politically and otherwise.

On August 7th 1919 the Law Officers expressed the opinion that the detention of these deportees is legal, 'such detention being an act of State, the propriety of which cannot be questioned in any Court of Law.'

² Not printed.

No. 101

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 23, 9.30 a.m.)

*No. 839 Telegraphic [E 8739/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, July 22, 1920, 7.5 p.m.

My telegram No. 829 of 17th July.¹

Movement in favour of signature of treaty has been still further accentuated during last few days.

Ferid Pasha has kept Cabinet together by accepting certain conditions imposed by Reshid's supporters.

Minister of Justice, who is of minor importance, has had to be sacrificed to animosity against latter, but they have formally agreed to principle of accepting treaty. Two leading Ministers belonging to this faction told Mr. Ryan emphatically on 21st July that there was no alternative to signing. Grand Vizier's present idea is to accompany acceptance by final appeal for relaxations of terms, but to intimate that treaty will be signed whether this appeal is entertained or not.²

Unless situation changes radically as result of some violent *coup* here or of developments in Thrace, acceptance of treaty may now be regarded as assured. Grand Vizier, though much disturbed by new Greek offensive in Thrace, said on 20th July that he proposed to instruct Turkish military authorities to offer no resistance, but to fall back on Enos-Midia and if necessary on Chatalja line.

He expressed uncertainty as to whether all his colleagues would agree to this alteration, and intimated that if they did not there would be a Cabinet crisis after all. Instructions not to resist have been issued since this conversation and there are still no signs of any Cabinet crisis.

While Reshid's faction appear thus to have resigned themselves to signature and have remained in . . .,³ they continue violently antagonistic to Grand Vizier.

They are probably preparing onslaught on his position as soon as treaty is

¹ No. 99.

² In his telegram No. 845 of July 23 (not printed) Admiral de Robeck summarized the contents of a note received from the Grand Vizier later on the 22nd. This announced the appointment of Turkish delegates for the purpose of signing the Treaty of Peace and at the same time made 'new appeal to sentiments of justice and equity of Entente Powers with the view to following modifications and declaration being introduced:

'1. Substitution of Enos-Midia line, which had previously been fixed as Turkish frontier for Strandia-Chatalja line.

'2. Exclusion (in case frontier is so thrown back) of shore of Sea of Marmora from neutral zone and limitation of latter to Straits.

'3. Special autonomous régime for Smyrna similar to that of free city of Hamburg.

'4. Turkish Government is anxious to declare that Caliphate, being "un point d'union islamique" and (*sic*) consequently religious question, can have no place in political treaty.

'Note asks me to communicate above to my Government and to use my influence to secure favourable reception.'

³ The text is here uncertain.

signed. Sultan gives no signs of life, and is either apathetic or very canny. There appears to be diminution of sympathy between him and Ferid. Crown Council will probably be held on 22nd July.

Reshid's faction made its convocation one of their conditions of remaining in office.

It is unlikely now to affect decision, but they may use it to elicit criticism which will weaken Ferid's eventual position.

There is little news of Nationalists in Asia Minor.

They are reported to be at variance amongst themselves.

More moderate section may submit inevitably after treaty is signed, especially as peasants are sick of whole business and want nothing but peace.

Extremists, however, will leave nothing undone to keep movement in being, and to retain means of waging guerrilla warfare in areas not in effective military occupation of Allies, in which they will be undoubtedly encouraged by hopes of Bolshevik assistance, now strengthened by our evacuation of Batoum⁴ and isolation of Armenia. Renewed attempts to excite popular feeling against native Christians will also have to be reckoned with.

⁴ See Vol. XII, No. 596.

No. 102

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 29, 9.15 a.m.)

No. 858 Telegraphic [E 9072/3/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, July 28, 1920, 1.20 p.m.

General Milne informs me that Turkish troops at Adrianople laid down their arms on 26th July and that King of Greece, accompanied by his Ministers, was to make ceremonial entry into the town on 27th July. He tells me that General Paraskevopoulos, Greek supreme commander, now proposes to renew Greek advance in Asia Minor against Mustapha Kemal, to advance up to Anatolian Railway, occupying Eskishehir and Afion Karabavar,¹ and to send column up to Angora. He has submitted this plan to Supreme Council for approval, and has already begun to retransfer troops from Thrace to Asia Minor.

French, who have hitherto been against giving a mandate to Greek army in Asia Minor, have veered round and are now strongly in favour of this Greek advance. Marshal Foch's liaison officer has discussed plan with General Paraskevopoulos, and is giving latter support of French military opinion.

General Milne is strongly averse on military grounds to any further Greek advance being authorised. Plan may lead to Greek troops getting compromised in interior, thus requiring us to give military assistance to extract them. With forces at his disposal and summer well advanced General Milne

¹ Amended in the Foreign Office to: 'Kara Hissar'.

is definitely opposed to our becoming involved in any military operations outside area to be demilitarised under Peace Treaty.

But political objections to Greek advance are equally weighty. Nothing could be more calculated to cause general revival of Turkish nationalist movement and to give it renewed support amongst masses of population, with whom, owing to its failure to defend the country, it has lately become considerably discredited; moreover, it is not to be supposed that Greeks will undertake advance for love of Allies, but will require very definite *quid pro quo*.

Turkish Government signs treaty on 28th July, and a further Greek advance is therefore beginning of a new war on the part of Greece. For Allies to allow such a situation to arise would alienate all moderate Turkish elements, upon whom we must now count to pacify country and with Allied guidance to restore normal conditions.

It is almost certain that present Grand Vizier would resign, and local situation would present great difficulties.

I cannot but think that a renewal of Greek advance after signature of peace would much discredit British prestige in Moslem world, and would be used against us by our enemies as a sign that we intended to make no peace with Islam.

Reason that French are supporting Greeks in this new plan is probably to deny use of Anatolian Railway to Nationalists, and thus create a more favourable situation for themselves in Cilicia, where their position is now difficult. In this they are considering only their own interests, and seemingly take no account of adverse effects which would be caused to Allied and particularly British interests by execution of Greek plans.

Object of Turkish Treaty which is now being signed is to bring about peace and settled conditions. A renewed Greek advance will perpetuate disorder and rebellion, and only sound Allied plan to my mind, now that Turks have accepted treaty, is to give them our fullest support and guidance—naval, military and political—in dealing themselves with discredited nationalist movement in Anatolia. This would, moreover, be in accordance with advice expressed in your telegram No. 406 of 5th May.²

I trust His Majesty's Government will give its earnest consideration to the above remarks and veto any . . .³ Greek advance in Asia Minor.

(Repeated to Athens, No. 72.)

² No. 59.

³ The text is here uncertain.

No. 103

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 29, 11 a.m.)

No. 861 Telegraphic [E 9076/11/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, July 28, 1920, 5.40 p.m.

Following sent to Foreign Office, No. 861, repeated to Bagdad No. 28. My immediately preceding telegram.¹

May I have your views of Kurdish proposals² in case it [*sic*] should take more definite shape than at present. Grand Vizier is in touch with Conservative Kurdish opinion which stands for autonomy now assured by treaty but which sees spectre of Bolshevism and disintegration of old-fashioned Kurdish system behind Mustafa Kemal.

Grand Vizier's position is this:—'Kurdistan is to be autonomous State under Treaty. Kurdish leaders hate Mustafa because he wants to bring Bolshevism in to support him. You hate Mustafa Kemal because he does not want your Treaty, let us therefore together use Kurds against him.' Scheme is not necessarily wholly impracticable though of course it is still attended by some of the difficulties suggested in my telegram No. 401³ and your reply sent from San Remo on April 24th,⁴ and it would be difficult to work it out without wholehearted French co-operation in view of inclusion of large part of Kurds in French sphere of influence.

¹ No. 860 of July 28 (not printed) which summarized a conversation between Admiral de Robeck and the Grand Vizier on July 26.

² See No. 56, n. 3. The Grand Vizier had referred to these proposals on July 26.

³ Of April 17, not printed.

⁴ No. 56.

No. 104

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

No. 332 Telegraphic [E 8900/56/44]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 28, 1920, 9 p.m.

Greek Minister has communicated to me copy of a note addressed by M. Veniselos to M. Millerand,¹ stating that the Italian Government have, at the eleventh hour, refused to carry out the Tittoni Agreement relative to the cession of the Dodecanese to Greece, and now propose to negotiate a fresh agreement containing important changes.² In these circumstances Greece refuses to sign the Turkish Treaty. When the territorial arrangements embodied in the draft of the Turkish Treaty and in the proposed tripartite agreement between Great Britain, France and Italy were settled at San

¹ Of July 25, not printed.

² The Tittoni-Venizelos Agreement of July 29, 1919, is printed in A. F. Frangulis, *La Grèce: son statut international, son histoire diplomatique*, vol. ii (Paris, 1934), pp. 93-98. For Count Sforza's note of July 22 to the Greek Minister at Rome and the latter's reply of July 27 see *ibid.*, p. 105.

Remo, it was on the clear understanding that the Tittoni Agreement of 1919 respecting the Dodecanese would be executed.³

The present Italian decision, therefore, seems to vitiate the foundation on which these draft conventions were built up, and His Majesty's Government feel that they are in consequence placed in a very awkward position.

So long as Greece does not sign the Turkish Treaty it is difficult for His Majesty's Government to bind themselves to the territorial arrangements made under the tripartite agreement, and Lord Derby has therefore been instructed provisionally to withhold his signature to that instrument.⁴

³ Cf. No. 107 below, nn. 3 and 4.

⁴ In Foreign Office telegram No. 836 of July 28 to Paris, not printed.

No. 105

Sir G. Buchanan (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received July 30, 11.35 a.m.)

No. 317 Telegraphic [E 9155/56/44]

NAPLES, July 29, 1920, 3.35 p.m.

Minister for Foreign Affairs whom I saw yesterday spoke to me about Dodecanese question. He said that circumstances had completely changed since convention of 1919¹ had been concluded and that as Italy had had to renounce compensations which were to have been conferred on her he had been obliged to avail himself of right, reserved to either party under convention, to denounce it. In insisting on retention of Rhodes without conferring on [in]habitants right of declaring by means of plebiscite their union with Greece in the event of Cyprus being ceded to her he was doing us indirect service. Otherwise His Majesty's Government would be constantly subject to pressure from Greece to cede Cyprus in order that clause relating to Rhodes might thus become operative. From his language I gathered that Rhodes is the only one of the islands which he proposes to retain.

Minister for Foreign Affairs further contended that, apart from intrinsic value of island, question was of importance in another point of view. In accepting office under Giolitti² he had been actuated by desire to come to a friendly understanding with Yugo-Slavs on the subject of Adriatic as he considered such a settlement of greatest importance to Italy. No country would however continue to support Minister who . . .³ but carry out policy of renunciation. He had renounced mandates in Albania and would probably have to give up Valona with the exception of Sasseno and two headlands.⁴ Baron Aliotti who had been negotiating on those lines was returning to report and in his absence negotiations would be continued by

¹ See No. 104, n. 2.

² Italian Prime Minister since June 1920.

³ The text is here uncertain: in the Foreign Office it was suggested that the words 'did nothing' should be supplied.

⁴ Cf. A. Giannini, *L'Albania dall'indipendenza all'unione con l'Italia, 1913-1939*, 4th ed., 1940, pp. 96-99, and Vol. XII, Nos. 173 and 182.

Monsieur Manzone [*sic*].⁵ He was hopeful of being able to effect settlement of Fiume question⁶ but this would entail further renunciations and were he now after withdrawing from Albania to abandon Rhodes as well his position would be so weakened that he would not possess authority to enable him to renounce Dalmatia.

Repeated to Athens.

⁵ Count G. Manzoni, Director General of Political Affairs in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁶ For the position of the Italo-Yugoslav negotiations on this question, see Vol. XII, No. 200.

No. 106

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 705 Telegraphic [E 9072/3/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 30, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your No. 858.¹

Question of renewed Greek advance in Asia Minor was discussed with M. Venizelos at Spa.² At that time he did not favour movement if Turks decided to sign Treaty, and he made it conditional upon supplies of equipment, arms, etc., by ourselves.³ No immediate action therefore seems to be practicable; but he is being consulted on the subject, and we will acquaint you with result.

In reply to your arguments, it should be borne in mind that Mustapha Kemal is enemy of Turkish Government no less than of the Allies, and that his defeat or disappearance, so far from being a cause of offence at Constantinople, would relieve Turks of task which they are powerless to perform themselves, and would be most effective guarantee for ratification of Treaty and setting up of new conditions created thereby.

¹ No. 102.

² Cf. Vol. VIII, No. 47, p. 445.

³ According to a minute by Lord Curzon, dated July 30, this view had been expressed by M. Venizelos in an interview at Spa with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

No. 107

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

No. 341 Telegraphic [E 9155/56/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 30, 1920, 11 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 317 (of 28 [29] July).¹

Dodecanese.

I gather that Italian Government justify their refusal to abide by the agreement concluded between Signor Tittoni and Monsieur Venizelos on

¹ No. 105.

July 29 1919² by invoking its seventh clause which provides that in case Italy did not obtain satisfaction in respect of her aspirations in Asia Minor, she would resume full liberty of action in regard to all the points of the agreement.

Whilst Italy had under this clause a clear right to denounce the agreement, she did not make use of it when the matter came before the Supreme Council in London in March last. The Supreme Council were then settling the principal provisions of the Turkish peace treaty. When the Italian delegates proposed the clause, now embodied in the treaty as article 122, under which the Dodecanese is ceded to Italy, the Italian delegates explained that this was necessary to give Italy a good title to the islands but that she had concluded an agreement with Greece by which the islands would in fact pass to that Power except Rhodes where a plebiscite was to be taken under circumstances to be determined.

It stands recorded in the *procès-verbaux* of the meetings of the Supreme Council that it was on this express understanding that the present article 122 was adopted.³ The same understanding was reaffirmed and acted upon at the San Remo Conference.⁴

By these transactions the Italian Government must clearly be held to have abandoned their right to denounce that part of the Italo-Greek agreement of July 29th 1919 which has reference to the Dodecanese. If Italy did not remain pledged to fulfil that agreement, the understanding on which the Supreme Council accepted article 122 of the Turkish treaty would be violated, and with it the basis on which the whole territorial settlement embodied in that treaty has been built up would be entirely vitiated. Neither does it appear to us to be open to the Italian Government to argue that circumstances have changed since 1919. They have not changed since San Remo or, if they have done so, it has been solely because of Italy's self-provoked reverses in Albania, and her inability to settle the Adriatic question⁵—failures for which it is not reasonable that Greece should now be asked to pay.

In these circumstances His Majesty's Government not only sympathize entirely with the Greek Government in their refusal to sign the Turkish treaty without the guarantees offered by the Tittoni-Venizelos agreement, but they are prevented from appending their own signature to that document, until this regrettable difference has been composed.

This creates a most unfortunate situation, since at very moment when Turkish plenipotentiaries are arriving in Paris to append their signatures to treaty, it is apparent that principal Allied Powers are not in a position to present it, having fallen out among themselves.

The responsibility for continuance of such a situation is one which I cannot think that the Italian Government on reflection will wish to assume, and you should press them with all the earnestness in your power to terminate it in the only way which is recommended both by expediency and by justice.

Dealing with matter as I have done on broadest ground, I have not

² See No. 104, n. 2.

³ See Vol. VII, No. 69, minute 5 (p. 599).

⁴ See Vol. VIII, No. 17, minute 4 (p. 191).

⁵ Cf. No. 105, nn. 4 and 6.

referred to Count Sforza about Rhodes,⁶ with which however I do not agree. Furthermore, his statement that this is the only island which he proposes to retain is not consistent with information which had reached us, that Italy is also demanding island of Khalki, as well as concessions for special rights in Smyrna and Cos.⁷

(Repeated to Paris, No. 851, and Athens, No. 127.)

⁶ The draft telegram here read: 'Count Sforza's argument about Rhodes'.

⁷ This information had been given by M. Venizelos to Commander Talbot, formerly H.M. Naval Attaché at Athens, who mentioned it during an interview with Mr. Max Muller (see No. 119 below, n. 1) at the Foreign Office on July 27.

No. 108

Earl Granville (Athens) to Earl Curzon (Received August 10)

No. 317 [E 9673/5459/44]

ATHENS, July 30, 1920

My Lord,

The success of the Greek arms in Eastern Thrace, the speedy fall of Adrianople and the capture of Tayar have been welcomed with great joy at Athens.¹ The news of the fall of Adrianople was published on the morning of the 26th instant: flags were at once hung out everywhere, there was a *Te Deum* at the cathedral in the evening, a salute was fired of 101 guns, and the town was illuminated at night.

The Opposition papers say that there was nothing like the popular enthusiasm which might and ought to have been expected, and they explain this as being due to the mania of the Government and the Veniselist Party of trying to monopolise all national events as their own successes; they declare that big crowds turned out at first, but rapidly melted away when all the bands passing through the town played the Veniselos song as if it were a national anthem. It is certainly true that the crowds which I saw were neither so big nor so excited and enthusiastic as I should have expected; it is probably also true that the patriotic feelings of the anti-Veniselists were damped by the strains of the song which is as obnoxious to them as was to the Veniselists 'Le fils de l'Aigle,' the war-song of the Constantinists in 1916 and 1917. But I think the Athenians are rather peculiar about enthusiasm; with a little skilful stage management and preparation you can collect enormous crowds which will cheer enthusiastically for almost anybody or anything, but the stage management and preparation are required, and without them the average Athenian, whatever his feelings may be, seems inclined to be undemonstrative.

The newspapers of both sides have been filled with panegyrics on the wonderful valour and efficiency of the Greek troops, and seem to forget that their contemptuous accounts of the way Tayar's troops threw down their arms and fled at the first sign of an attack somewhat depreciate the value of

¹ The Greek forces had entered Adrianople on July 25. Cf. No. 102.

the Greek performance. There is no doubt of the truth of the French saying, 'l'appétit vient en mangeant.' I do not think there is now a single paper which does not claim Constantinople for Greece, and most of them write as if its possession were not only a future certainty but a very imminent one; some of them are already talking of the move of the capital from Athens to Constantinople.

British prestige and popularity stand very high indeed: it is universally believed that it is due to His Majesty's Government alone that the Greeks have been allowed to go ahead in Asia Minor and Thrace, and the Prime Minister's eulogistic speech on Greece in the House of Commons² has given universal and unbounded pleasure, even the Constantinists are delighted with it, particularly owing to his tactful sentence to the effect that the greatness of Veniselos is nothing strange or unusual in Greece. As a small and unimportant sign of British popularity, I may mention that I was recognised as I came out of the cathedral after the *Te Deum* and received a real ovation, which was continued in the streets as I drove away; I believe there was no similar cheering for any other Allied Minister.

I have, &c.,
GRANVILLE

² On July 21; see 132 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 477-80.

No. 109

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 708 Telegraphic [E 9076/11/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 31, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 861 (of 28th July.¹ Suggested use of Kurds against Nationalists.)

Please inform the Grand Vizier that His Majesty's Government do not see their way to accepting his suggestion, at any rate at present.

¹ No. 103.

No. 110

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received August 2, 5.15 p.m.)

*No. 876 Telegraphic [E 9184/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *August 1, 1920, 11.15 p.m.*

My telegram No. 875 of 1st August.¹

Crisis had its origin in circumstances mentioned in my telegram No. 839 of 22nd July.² Situation came to a head rather suddenly, apparently owing

¹ Not printed. This reported the resignation of the Turkish Government on July 30 and the formation of a new Cabinet, again headed by Ferid Pasha.

² No. 101.

to dissension between Grand Vizier and Jemil Pasha having assumed personal character. Grand Vizier was, however, attacked from many sides, and crisis was inevitable sooner or later.

Assailants are for the moment hoisted with their own petard. New Cabinet is, as usual, weak, but some skill has been shown in composition of it. It includes Hadi Pasha and Riza Tewfik; who are two men most completely committed to Grand Vizier's peace policy, inasmuch as they agreed to undertake task of signing treaty. It comprises several representatives of *Entente libérale* (or rather off-shoot of that party which calls itself Moderate *Entente libérale*), but they are among the more respectable members of that rather mixed group, and inclusion of little-known men like Minister of Public Works and Pious Foundations and Acting Minister of Finance deprives Government of violent party colour. Strongest party men are Sheikh-ul-Islam and Minister of Commerce, who was Vali of Konia last year and is sworn foe of Nationalists.

New Minister of Interior has spent several years out of Turkey. He is a man of old-fashioned Hamidian type. Your Excellency will have seen his name [Reshid Mumtaz Pasha] in reports from Switzerland last year.

Original *Entente libérale* Party are hostile, but they count for little.

New Government will be object of sustained attack and intrigue. If Ferid can hold on for some time in spite of this it will be in our interest, as he is only Grand Vizier who can more or less be trusted to proceed, not only with signature, but ratification of treaty. After ratification, his extreme unpopularity may handicap him so greatly as to make his retention of office of little advantage to himself or anyone else.

No. 111

Sir G. Buchanan (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received August 2, 9.30 a.m.)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 9179/56/44]

Very urgent

ROME, August 1, 1920, 11.45 p.m.

I spoke to Minister for Foreign Affairs today in sense of your telegrams Nos. 332¹ and 341.²

I dwelt more especially on fact that Italy's right to denounce agreement had now lapsed and that after having induced Powers to embody Article 121³ in Treaty for expressed purpose of giving her legal right to cede Dodecanese to Greece she would, if she failed to fulfil this obligation, not only violate the understanding on which Supreme Council had accepted Article 122 but also vitiate the whole of territorial settlement embodied in Treaty. She could not moreover claim to denounce it on the ground that she had failed to receive the compensation contemplated as this was not owing to fault of Greeks, but because she had for internal reasons voluntarily renounced it.

I then warned His Excellency of grave responsibility he would be incurring

¹ No. 104.

² No. 107.

³ In the Foreign Office this was corrected to '122'.

were he to persist in an attitude that would give Turkish delegates impression that Allies were quarrelling amongst themselves and of serious consequences that might arise from leaving Turkish question longer open.

I further reminded him of ever-increasing gravity of Polish question⁴ and I made a formal appeal to him not to add to our difficulties by raising a question of secondary importance when we might at any moment be faced with danger of conquest of Poland by Bolsheviks.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said that we ought certainly to concentrate on really important questions.

He very much feared that proposed London Conference⁵ would never take place, and that Powers would not be able to save Poland as none of them could send troops to her assistance. It was, therefore, all the more necessary to settle secondary questions by a friendly compromise. We then proceeded to discuss Italian claims with regard to Dodecanese and Minister for Foreign Affairs eventually agreed to restrict them as follows:—

1. Italy will renounce her claim to Khalki.
 2. Any privileges or concessions granted to another Power in Smyrna shall be extended to Italy.
 3. Archaeological Museum in Kos to remain property of Municipality but its management to be placed in hands of Italian Archaeological Society; Municipality to lease to said Society for term of 99 years the old historical castle which has been restored by that Society.
 4. His Majesty's Government to consent by means of notes not to cede Cyprus to Greece without a preliminary agreement with Italian Government.
- In the event of Cyprus being so ceded term of years in which Plebiscite is to take place to be extended from five to say twenty years.

Minister for Foreign Affairs dwelt on importance of Rhodes to Italy as a commercial emporium on the way to East as well as personal interest which the King took in the matter owing to old associations of House of Savoy with Knights of Rhodes. I trust that it may be possible to effect compromise on above lines, as I fear it will be difficult to induce Minister for Foreign Affairs to make any further concession.⁶

⁴ See Vol. XI, Chap. II, Nos. 371 ff.

⁵ Ibid., No. 320.

⁶ In his reply, telegram No. 348 of Aug. 2 (not printed), Lord Curzon presumed that 'Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs is communicating with Greek Government as regards concessions he is prepared to make. . . . The matter is extremely urgent.'

No. 112

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Naples)

*No. 350 Telegraphic [E 9421/56/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 3, 1920, 9 p.m.

Italian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon and asked me to extricate his Government from difficulty in which they were involved with

Greek Government about Dodecanese by agreeing to stipulations that we would not at any time cede Cyprus to Greece without prior agreement with Italy. I replied that I felt very reluctant to be involved in any way in this regrettable misunderstanding between the two Governments, in which I could not conceal my belief that Italy was in the wrong, and that I could not ask my colleagues to agree to any such stipulation about Cyprus, which, when made public, would be sure to arouse much controversy. As regards the likelihood of Cyprus being ceded to Greece, I thought that he need not be under any alarm in the near future, for though I could not, of course, speak for any subsequent Government, and could only speak unofficially for this, the matter not having been brought officially before the Cabinet, I knew the sentiments of my principal colleagues sufficiently to be aware that the proposal, if revived, would not meet with a very favourable reception. In these circumstances, I advised the Italian Government to meet M. Venizelos frankly on the subject of the dispute, to withdraw their own objections, if satisfied on a few minor points, and not any longer to delay the signature of the Turkish Peace Treaty, which we, for our part, could not sign until this difficulty was solved.¹

(Repeated to Paris, No. 869; and Athens, No. 131.)

¹ In his telegram to Paris, No. 868 of Aug. 3 (not printed), Lord Curzon informed Lord Derby that, according to a communication from the Greek Minister in London, *pourparlers* had actually been started in Paris between M. Coromilos, the Greek Minister in Rome, and the Italian Ambassador in Paris.

No. 113

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 717 Telegraphic [E 9171/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 4, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 870 of July 30th.¹

The idea of recommending to the Turkish Government the despatch of a Turkish mission with the powers and functions as suggested in paragraph 7

¹ Not printed. In para. 7 of this telegram Admiral de Robeck reported that 'the High Commissioners concur in submitting to Allied Governments following proposal: To recommend to Turkish Government formation of a mission composed of persons possessing real authority and capable of obtaining a hearing from moderate Nationalists. This mission would be sent to Anatolia to explain the situation and to communicate authentic documents and notes exchanged with Conference and to report Greek successes and Nationalists' defeats in Asia Minor, and to make it clear persistence in attitude exacted by Kemalists chiefs would make inevitable the advance of Allies, and particularly of Greek army, loss of Constantinople and disappearance of Turkey. Mission would, on the other hand, emphasise that acceptance of treaty would result in termination of war, of actions, of conscription and the establishment of order, tranquillity, good administration and the prosperity of country. Mission would convey text of a declaration made in the name of Allied Governments by High Commissioners setting out the foregoing.

'It would communicate it to the population and to those with whom [text here uncertain]. If mission did not succeed entirely, it is reasonable to hope that it would at least sow seeds of discord amongst Nationalists, thus facilitating military action which would have

is approved, unless there is a decided change for the better in the relations of the Nationalists towards the Central Government. In this latter connection I should be glad to know what significance is to be attached to the visit to Constantinople reported in a 'Times' message of 31st July.²

to be undertaken. Its despatch would, in any case, gain time necessary for the organisation of Turkish forces, which would permit of taking action without having recourse to dangerous use of Greek army.

'High Commissioners urgently solicit instructions from Allied Governments whether these proposals are acceptable.'

² This message, printed in *The Times* of Aug. 2, p. 7, reported the arrival of the Nationalist Vali of Konia, who was 'understood to be the bearer of an offer of submission from Mustapha Kemal himself', on condition of an amnesty and the appointment as Grand Vizier of Ahmed Izzet Pasha. In his telegram No. 927 of Aug. 16 (not printed) Admiral de Robeck replied that it was not clear whether the Vali had a definite mission from the Nationalist leaders or not and that nothing had come so far of the matter, which could not 'be considered to have more significance than previous attempts, of which there have been many, to find basis of composition between Central Government and Nationalists'.

No. 114

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 719 Telegraphic [E 9172/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 4, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 871 of 30th July.¹

I approve the proposed visit to the Sultan after signature of treaty.

¹ Not printed. In this telegram Admiral de Robeck had reported the view of the Allied High Commissioners that after the signature of the peace treaty it would be desirable for them to visit the Sultan, for, while 'merely in the nature of an act of courtesy and of a semi-official character', such a visit 'would nevertheless possess advantage of enhancing prestige and strengthening the authority of Sultan in the eyes of the population'.

No. 115

Earl Curzon to Earl Granville (Athens)

No. 406 [E 9469/56/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 5, 1920

My Lord,

M. Venizelos came over from Paris this afternoon on purpose to see me concerning the unfortunate dispute that has arisen between the Italian and Greek Governments concerning the disposition of the Dodecanese.

The circumstances of this dispute have already been recorded in previous despatches and telegrams,¹ and need not be recapitulated here. I have not concealed from the Italian Government, and I did not conceal from M. Venizelos, that I thought that the right was entirely on his side, and that I

¹ e.g. Nos. 104, 105, 107, 110, 112.

would gladly do what lay in my power to secure a solution favourable to the legitimate claims of Greece. Up to the present moment the British Government had demonstrated their sympathy by withholding the signature of their Ambassador in Paris both to the Turkish Peace Treaty and to the Tripartite Agreement between Italy, France, and Great Britain.

I pointed out to M. Venizelos that it did not appear to me fair or reasonable indefinitely to postpone the signature of the Peace Treaty because of the occurrence of this dispute on a secondary point between two of the signatory Powers. Much larger interests were involved, and it was desirable in the interests of peace—the Turkish delegates being already in Paris, and prepared to sign—that signature should be proceeded with without delay.

M. Venizelos entirely concurred in this reasoning and thought that, so far as we were concerned, we should be quite right in signing on Saturday² or at the earliest possible date.

On the other hand, I said that I was prepared to adhere to the procedure adopted by Lord Derby, of refusing to sign the Tripartite Agreement until the difficulty between Greece and Italy was composed.³

M. Venizelos explained to me the various claims and demands which the Italian Government had put forward as a condition of their signature of the Treaty: claims as regards a privileged position for Italy in Smyrna, both during and after the five years' period postulated by the Treaty; as regards the archæological explorations which had been conducted by Italy during her ten years' occupation of the islands; as regards the Castle of Cos; and most of all as regards the extension of the term postulated in the Greco-Italian Agreement for the possible plebiscite to be held in Rhodes, in the event of that island being ceded by Italy to Greece, as the sequel to a hypothetical cession of Cyprus to Greece by Great Britain.

I told M. Venizelos that I did not desire to be drawn into, or even to express an opinion upon, these conditions, which were a matter for discussion and settlement between Greece and Italy; and, when he made the suggestion that the plebiscite, if ever held in Rhodes, might take place under the auspices of the League of Nations, I said that this again was a matter which he might discuss with Italy, but upon which H.M. Government would prefer not to express an opinion.

Desiring, however, to be perfectly frank with M. Venizelos, I told him plainly, as I had already told the Italian Ambassador,⁴ that I did not regard the situation as likely to arise, at any rate in the near future, because H.M. Government, as at present advised, had no intention of surrendering the island of Cyprus to anybody.

M. Venizelos observed that he was well aware of this, and reminded me with truth that he had never, during the Peace negotiations, advanced a single claim in this direction, or even mentioned the question of Cyprus. Nor did he now propose to do so. He trusted to the future—it might be ten, fifteen, or twenty years hence—for the solution of this question.

To this I replied that none of us could answer for the future, but that I was

² Aug. 7.

³ See No. 104.

⁴ See No. 112.

speaking, as alone I was entitled to speak, for the British Government now.

M. Venizelos expressed himself completely satisfied with this declaration.

As regards the settlement of the difficulty with Italy, he was personally prepared to meet her in every reasonable way, although her claim as regards Smyrna he must absolutely refuse. But he felt confident that if, as I had said, Great Britain (while signing the Peace Treaty) declined for the moment to sign the Tripartite Agreement; if France, as he knew was the case, approved this course; and if he himself also declined for the moment to append his signature to the Peace Treaty—the pressure thus applied to Italy would be amply sufficient to induce her to give way. He asked for no more, and declared not merely his satisfaction but his profound gratitude, for this measure of support.

I added that I thought it most desirable that the signatures of Greece and Italy to the Peace Treaty should not be indefinitely postponed, and that they ought to be forthcoming (if his negotiations were successful) within two or three days' time.

He undertook to return to Paris on the morrow, and at once to resume his negotiations with the Italian Government. He was quite willing to extend the five years' period for the hypothetical plebiscite in Rhodes to ten, fifteen or even twenty years, provided it were accompanied by a condition that the Rhodian population who voted in it should be the inhabitants, or the families and descendants of the inhabitants, of 1919. This was necessary in order to avoid the swamping of the electorate by the Italians, who, in their inability to persuade their own countrymen to migrate to the island, were already beginning to flood it with Moslems from the mainland.

This, again, I remarked, was a matter that he must settle with the Italians. It related to a contingency which I could neither foresee nor contemplate, and with which the present British Government had no concern.

I undertook to communicate to the Italian Ambassador in London, and to the French Government, through our Ambassador in Paris, the course which I proposed to take; and M. Venizelos left me, expressing the utmost pleasure at the results of our conversation.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

No. 116

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Grahame (Paris)

No. 879 Telegraphic: by bag [E 9469/56/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 6, 1920, 12 noon¹

I saw Monsieur Venizelos yesterday evening and discussed with him course to be adopted in reference to unfortunate dispute between Greek and Italian Governments. I told him that I did not think it fair or reasonable to hang up signature of Turkish Peace Treaty, because of this eleventh hour

¹ This telegram had been telephoned to Paris at 11 a.m. on Aug. 6.

squabble between two of the Signatory Powers; and that, in accordance with the wishes of Monsieur Millerand, as reported by you,² I would give you authority to sign on Saturday or at earliest possible date.

On the other hand His Majesty's Government support you in declining to sign Tripartite Agreement until this matter is settled. Monsieur Venizelos who is returning to Paris today to resume his negotiations with Italian Ambassador, will decline to sign Peace Treaty on Saturday and Italy will presumably follow the same course. This partial signature is to be regretted. But Monsieur Venizelos is confident that the pressure applied by our attitude regarding the Tripartite Agreement, and by postponement of his own signature to Peace Treaty will be sufficient to bring the Italian Government to reason without delay; and he anticipates that the signatures both of Italy and Greece will be forthcoming within a very few days' time. I propose to explain this course to Italian Ambassador this afternoon and you should do the same at once to Monsieur Millerand, upon whose approval I rely. Please also discuss with him the question whether we ought to indicate to the Turkish Delegates the existence of the Tripartite Agreement, even though it be not actually signed, remembering that it was agreed at San Remo that it should be communicated to the Turkish Government simultaneously with signature of Treaty.³

² In Paris telegram No. 923 of Aug. 4, not printed.

³ See Vol. VIII, No. 13, minute 1 and Appendix A (para. 8).

No. 117

Sir G. Buchanan (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received August 9, 11.45 a.m.)

*Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 9629/56/44]**

ROME, August 7, 1920, 11 p.m.

I read to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day your telegram No. 869 to Paris,¹ and, after recapitulating various points referred to by Lord Derby in his telegrams Nos. 921² and 923,² asked what was real difficulty in the way of an agreement with Greek Government.

Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that Italian Government could never accept M. Veniselos' demand to leave out of plebiscite any immigrants who have come to Rhodes since 1919. He believed, however, that M. Veniselos was far too sensible to insist on proposal that would cause endless disputes. The other points which I had mentioned could all be settled by a friendly compromise.

He much regretted that His Majesty's Government are not in a position to engage not to cede Cyprus without a preliminary agreement with Italy, as this would have offered easiest solution of question. In view of their refusal, Italian Government was obliged to insist on prolongation of terms within which plebiscite must take place.

¹ No. 112.

² Of Aug. 4, not printed.

He had asked for term of twenty-five years, and M. Veniselos had offered one of seven. This was great obstacle to agreement. Italy had loyally supported Greece's claims to Thrace and Smyrna, and as she had herself gained nothing by agreement, her request for a prolongation of term of plebiscite was very modest.

I said I had seen it stated in press that one reason why Italy had been obliged to denounce agreement was that it was impossible for her to support Greece's claim to Southern Albania after recognising independence of that country in its entirety.³ I was afraid, however, that fact that Italy had renounced her mandate of Albania did not bind Greece to renounce her claim in Southern Albania, and I did not quite see how his Excellency could oblige her to do so. Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that under agreement Italy had promised Greece her 'active' support in this question. This she could no longer give, but she had no intention of having recourse to threats to make her abandon her claims. On the contrary, should Allies decide that those claims were to be made good, Italy would restrict her action to endeavouring to procure such guarantees for Albania as would render decision of Allies more acceptable to latter.

I am afraid Lord Derby is right in suggesting in his telegram No. 921 that all odium of pressing Italians to yield is likely to fall on us, as press is already saying that, having found a new ally in Mediterranean to whom we can refuse nothing, we are forgetting an old ally who by entering the war at a critical moment rendered us such a signal service.

(Repeated to Paris.)

³ An agreement between Italy and Albania had been signed on Aug. 2, 1920; see Giannini, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

No. 118

*Sir G. Grahame (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received August 9, 9.25 p.m.)*¹

No. 943 Telegraphic [E 9631/56/44]

PARIS, August 9, 1920, 5.45 p.m.

Italian Government proposes, as last concession, that League of Nations should decide how plebiscite in Rhodes should be taken 15 years hence. M. Venizelos has accepted. Italians have also promised full local autonomy for Castellorizo.

There is now no obstacle on Allies' side to signature of Turkish treaty. M. Venizelos is ready to sign tomorrow.

I propose to sign Tripartite Agreement also.²

M. Venizelos sends cordial thanks for support of His Majesty's Government.

¹ The gist of this telegram had been telephoned to Earl Curzon earlier on Aug. 9 but the time of the telephone call is not recorded.

² In his telegram No. 953 of Aug. 10 Sir G. Grahame reported the signature at Sèvres on the afternoon of Aug. 10 of the Turkish Treaty and the Tripartite Agreement. For the text of these treaties see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 113, pp. 652-776 and 797-803 respectively.

No. 119

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 747 Telegraphic [E 9405/7044/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 12, 1920, 6 p.m.*

In view of signature of peace the moment has arrived for appointing a Diplomatic officer as High Commissioner in the interval preceding the ratification of the Treaty. I propose to instruct Mr. Max Muller¹ to leave in about a month's time for Constantinople in order to relieve you.

His Majesty's Government greatly regret the loss of your valuable services as High Commissioner. The change is solely due to the altered political conditions arising from the signature of peace, which involve an early reversion to the normal diplomatic procedure.

Despatch follows.²

¹ A Minister Plenipotentiary in H.M. Diplomatic Service, at this time working in the Foreign Office.

² This letter of appreciation of Admiral de Robeck's 'great services', dated Nov. 23, is not printed.

No. 120

Earl Curzon to Earl Granville (Athens)

No. 137 Telegraphic [E 9679/106/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 12, 1920, 6 p.m.*

High Commission Constantinople telegraphed 31 July that Greek Military Authorities Smyrna ordered forced circulation of drachma at 13½ Turkish piastres under threat of court-martial.¹

Please request Hellenic Government to postpone measure 'pending discussion by Allies as it violates Article 77 of Treaty, and as all Allies are equally interested in measures affecting Turkish credit.'²

Repeated to Constantinople No. 749.

¹ Constantinople telegram No. 874, not printed.

² Lord Curzon subsequently instructed Lord Granville to make a formal protest to the Greek Government (Foreign Office telegram No. 150 of Aug. 25, not printed) against their local authorities' refusal to pay the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Company's account for services rendered 'except in drachmas at rate of exchange fixed by themselves'. Mr. Claud Russell, President of the Inter-Allied Financial Commission at Athens, under cover of his despatch No. 421 of Oct. 20 (not printed) transmitted a copy of a letter from the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs, dated Oct. 5/18, claiming that the question of payment to the Company had been satisfactorily settled.

No. 121

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received August 13, 2.20 p.m.)

No. 911 Telegraphic [E 9886/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, August 12, 1920, 8.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 876 last paragraph.¹

Now that Treaty of Peace has been signed Turks will quickly discover that it makes very little difference pending its coming into force. This will cause disappointment and political situation may become even more chaotic than it is at present.

Ferid has begun to show signs of breaking down under physical strain.

He collapsed temporarily on August 6th.

He is now better but complete collapse might occur at any time.

In any case he is beset on all sides by political enmities which may drive him from power.

Whatever may happen later it seems desirable that he should remain in office to ratify Treaty of Peace.

Procedure to which he has made up his mind is the only practical one but it is so clearly unconstitutional that no other Grand Vizier may be willing to follow it.

I welcome intimation contained in your telegram No. 718.²

May I be further informed whether any estimate can be made of probable date of Allied ratifications necessary for coming into force of Treaty of Peace?

Any information on this subject would help my Colleagues and me in tiding over the new transitional period which has now begun. Grand Vizier has already questioned me as to probable date of Allied ratifications.

If I may venture to express my own opinion on wider aspects of situation it is that early conclusion of Turkish Peace is infinitely desirable in present circumstances.

No headway can be made with Peace of North East Asia Minor until a peace provides new starting point and there are still far too many dangerous possibilities in Caucasus to justify us in indifference in respect of the Turko-Persian Frontier disorder on this side of frontier.

If we are going to war with Bolshevik Russia it should obviously be our aim to minimise risk of collaboration between Turkish Nationalists and Bolsheviks.

First step in this direction must be to stabilise Turkish situation to some extent by making definite Peace with lawful Government.³

¹ No. 110.

² Of Aug. 4, not printed. This had stated that 'as soon as the Treaty is signed H.M.G. will take action as quickly as possible, for the constitution of the commissions whose formations are laid down in the Treaty'.

³ In his telegram No. 766 of Aug. 18 (not printed) Lord Curzon informed Admiral de Robeck that Parliament, which would not reassemble until Oct. 19, 'must be given an opportunity of discussing the Treaty before its ratification. It cannot thus be ratified for some time'.

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 647 [E 9934/37/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 20, 1920

Sir:—

With reference to my despatch No. 486 of June 28th¹ and your despatch No. 335 of March 11th¹ on the subject of the release of Turkish prisoners and deportees under detention at Malta, I have to state that the matter has again come up for discussion and it was decided that the list of these prisoners and deportees should be revised by the Attorney General with a view to selecting the names of those whom it was proposed to prosecute so that those against whom no proceedings are contemplated should be released at the first convenient opportunity.

A memorandum on the subject, copy of which I transmit herewith, was drawn up by the Law Officers of the Crown. As indicated in the concluding paragraph, I should be glad to have your observations as to the possibility of the release of any of the category dealt with by the Law Officers.

In the same connection, it has been suggested that Colonel Rawlinson and Captain C. L. Campbell, detained by the Nationalists,² might be exchanged against some of the Turkish prisoners at Malta. As most of the political deportees there were arrested by the Turkish Government and transferred to Malta for safe custody at their instance, it occurs to me that the present Turkish Government may be reluctant to agree to their return to Turkey until the Nationalists agree to accept the terms of the Treaty or until after the exchange of ratifications. I should, however, be grateful for the expression of your views as to the feasibility of any such exchange.³

I am, &c.,
(for the Secretary of State)
J. A. C. TILLEY⁴

¹ Not printed. Cf. No. 100.

² Lt.-Col. A. Rawlinson, Capt. Campbell, and a small party of other ranks had been detained since March 16, 1920.

³ For the reply to this despatch see No. 177 below.

⁴ Sir J. Tilley was an Assistant Secretary in the Foreign Office.

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 122

Memorandum by the Law Officers of the Crown

August 4, 1920

The list of Turkish subjects who have been sent to Malta on the instructions of H.M. High Commissioner at Constantinople and are there detained falls roughly into three classes—

1. Political offenders.
2. Persons accused of Deportations, Pillage and Massacres.
3. Persons accused of ill-treatment of Prisoners of War.

There are also some, the reason for whose detention is not stated.

The third class is the only one which comes within our purview, and we have no knowledge as to the individuals contained in the other classes.

The identification of those charged with the ill-treatment of Prisoners of War is a matter of some difficulty, owing to the fact that many Turks bear the same or a similar name, the spelling whereof varies considerably. The only person on this list who appears to be quite clearly identifiable with an individual whose prosecution has already been recommended by the Committee which has enquired into allegations of breaches of the Laws of War is 2707 Major Mazloun Bey Edib. The case of this officer appears to be a particularly bad one. In addition, it is possible that 2676 Djellal Bey, 2679 Tewfik Mehmet, 2680 Tewfik Ahmed, 2694 Djemal Effendi Abdul and 2710 Hakky Bey Ibrahim may be identical with persons of similar names, whose prosecution has been recommended, but this cannot on the information contained in this list be established with any certainty.

So far as concerns the material that has been before us, the above are the only persons whose detention on the ground of ill-treatment of Prisoners of War seems desirable, but we would observe that the arrests have all been made on the instructions of the High Commissioner at Constantinople. He no doubt acted on evidence which came into his hands and reference to him would appear to be desirable before any definite action is taken for the release of any of these men.

GORDON HEWART
ERNEST M. POLLOCK

No. 123

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received September 8)

No. 1191 [E 11069/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, August 23, 1920

My Lord,

With reference to my telegram No. 946 of the 23rd instant,¹ I have the honour to state that the audiences accorded by the Sultan to my French and Italian colleagues and myself took place in one of the kiosks of Yildiz Palace late on the afternoon of the 21st August.

2. We were received by the Sultan in order of seniority as High Commissioners, i.e., French, Italian, British. Although the audiences were private, they were carried out on the Turkish side with practically the same ceremonial as if they were official, except that uniform was not worn. Thus the Grand Vizier, who as you are aware is also Minister for Foreign Affairs, made a point of himself attending the Sultan.

3. As this is the first occasion since the 21st September 1914 on which a British representative has been to the Palace, and the first meeting with the

¹ Not printed.

present Sultan, it may be of interest if I preface the account of my interview with my personal impressions of His Majesty.

4. The Sultan, though well-dressed and generally well-groomed, presents a somewhat shrunken appearance. His hair is completely white, and he shows many signs of the strain which he has gone through since his accession. At the beginning of the audience, he brought out his words with a hesitancy which was almost painful, and which might have been due to extreme nervousness or overmastering emotion. The former is the more probable explanation. He gained confidence or composure as the interview proceeded, but he worked his lower jaw continuously both in speech and in silence, and kept his eyes for the most part either on the ground, or, while the conversation was being interpreted, on what passed outside the window. More than once, however, he relieved the conversation with sallies, which showed a considerable sense of humour, and during these passages he raised his eyes, and his face lit up with a very attractive smile.

5. In physical appearance he presents a certain resemblance to his immediate predecessor, though he is of a slighter and more refined type, and displays an intelligence which, I am told, Mehmed Reshid either completely lacked or most successfully concealed. My general impression was that of a man of no great force of character or personality, but of considerable sincerity and amiability and of some mental grasp. In that part of the conversation in which he sought to draw me out as to the prospects of British help for Turkey in the future, he showed more than a little tenacity, and there was no lack of energy in his denunciation of the adventurers who had ruined his country. His manners are simple and unaffected, but his bearing was neither undignified nor in the smallest degree abject.

6. My audience lasted about forty minutes. The Grand Vizier interpreted for the Sultan. As he translated more than freely from and into French,² and as Mr. Ryan, who attended me, had to base himself rather on the French of his Highness than on the Sultan's Turkish in rendering His Majesty's remarks into English, it is difficult to produce an exact record of the conversation. The following summary, however, represents with substantial accuracy what passed.

7. The Sultan said that Turkey had passed many black days in the course of the last ten years, but that the present occasion was a bright moment which he hoped augured a happier future. He spoke with bitterness of the ruin brought upon his country by a gang of adventurers. He alluded to the prospect of the early restoration of normal diplomatic relations. He desired, he said, to take this earliest opportunity of asking for news of the health of His Majesty the King.

8. I expressed my sense of the honour of being received by His Majesty, and my satisfaction, as an Admiral, at being the first representative to visit a monarch at the hands of whose predecessors previous Admirals had received so many marks of distinguished consideration. Turkey, I said, was entering on a new era. I hoped it would be a happy and prosperous one,

² The text in the Confidential Print here reads: 'more freely from than into French'.

under the auspices of that good and wise administration which I trusted would now be inaugurated. I promised to convey to the proper quarter the Sultan's enquiries for the King, my latest news of whom was good, and asked that I might be permitted at the same time to transmit to the King as good an account of His Majesty's own health.

9. The Sultan, reading more than I had intended into my mention of relations between former Admirals and his predecessors, said he took it that I myself drew a sharp distinction between the clique, who had brought about all of Turkey's recent disasters, and the true Turks, who had no part or lot in their misdeeds. That clique consisted of men who were not Turks at all. They had trodden underfoot all that was sacred in this country, and one of the things on which they had trampled was the tradition of friendship with Great Britain. The true Turks, who were the great majority in the country, prized nothing more than that tradition, which it was their ambition to revive and to abide by. His Majesty directed the Grand Vizier to emphasize particularly the point that the others were not real Turks, and said that, if they were scrutinized one by one, this would be found to be literally true.

10. On my saying that I was sure that the distinction drawn by the Sultan was fully appreciated in England, His Majesty expressed satisfaction. He said that, in giving orders for the signature of a treaty which was, as it were, Turkey's death sentence, he had been borne up by the hope that he could rely on British assistance in the future. Turkey was sore stricken, and her wounds were deep. She needed the helping hand of a friend, if she were to survive.

11. I observed that every country in Europe was suffering from wounds of the war. Turkey, I said, given a good administration, should not be less capable of recovery than others. As for help from outside, I referred His Majesty to your Lordship's statement in the House of Lords on the 4th August.³ The Sultan, however, insisted that Turkey's wounds were deeper than those of any other country. He pressed his point regarding her need for help in language which showed that what he had in mind was the need of special support from Great Britain, rather than joint assistance of the Allies. Could Turkey, he asked, perform the double task of picking herself up and striking out a new line of action without one powerful prop on which to lean?

12. I said I understood Your Lordship's speech to mean that outside help would not be stinted to a regenerated Turkey, and that I was sure that as the country progressed in good administration under the wise guidance of His Majesty, she would receive in an increasing measure the help required to ensure her prosperity.

13. The Sultan said he desired to thank me on this, the first occasion which had presented itself, for the constant consideration which had been shown by myself and the High Commission generally since the Armistice. I replied that, though the circumstances had hitherto precluded personal intercourse, we had been animated by the conviction that we had facing us, in the person of His Majesty, one whose desires and objects were similar to

³ See 41 *H.L. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 735-8.

our own. I thanked him for the expressions he had used and for the frankness with which he had spoken to me on the subjects we had discussed. I said I would not fail to report all that he had said to the British Government.

14. In dismissing me, His Majesty said he had detained me perhaps a long time, but that people in trouble were apt to be garrulous, and that that must be his excuse. I mention this detail of the conversation as an illustration of the semi-humorous [*sic*] touches with which, as I have indicated above, the Sultan more than once allowed himself to illuminate the interview.

I have, &c.

J. M. DE ROBECK,
High Commissioner

No. 124

Earl Curzon to His Majesty's Representatives at Paris, Rome and Tokyo

*No. 945¹ Telegraphic [E 10230/3/44]**

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 25, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Grand Vizier has sounded High Commissioner at Constantinople² as to whether British and Allied Governments will receive Turkish representatives to act unofficially as Chargés d'Affaires pending ratification of treaty.

On the whole I am disposed to agree. But in this and in larger question of permanent representation, His Majesty's Government trust that Allies will only act after consultation and in common, as they did in the case of Germany.³ Their own proposal is to send out a diplomat as High Commissioner very shortly and, on ratification, to appoint him Minister.

Appointment of Ambassadors, in view of altered status of Turkey, would seem absurd. Please consult Government to which you are accredited and let me know as soon as possible whether they agree.

¹ No. 945 to Paris, No. 378 to Rome, No. 286 to Tokyo.

² As reported in Admiral de Robeck's telegram No. 932 of Aug. 19, not printed.

³ See Vol. VIII, No. 32, minute 3, and No. 33, minute 1.

No. 125

Mr. Henderson¹ (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received August 27, 6.15 p.m.)

No. 1033 Telegraphic [E 10541/10115/44]

PARIS, *August 27, 1920, 2.45 p.m.*

Your Lordship's telegram No. 945 of August 25th.²

French Government are willing to receive Turkish representative as Chargé d'Affaires here pending coming into force of Treaty.

French Government are however in favour of eventual appointment of Ambassadors at Constantinople for reasons given already, I understand, to

¹ Mr. N. M. Henderson, 1st Secretary in H.M. Embassy, Paris, acting Chargé d'Affaires from Aug. 25 to Sept. 1.

² No. 124.

Lord Hardinge by French Chargé d'Affaires in London, namely importance of French and presumably other Allied interests in Turkey, and more particularly importance of various commissions of control (financial, naval, straits, etc.) which will shortly function at Constantinople and which should properly be subordinated to respective representatives of higher rank than Minister.

Secretary-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed me that French Government contemplated shortly giving personal rank of Ambassador to Monsieur de France [*sic*] whom they proposed to retain at Constantinople. He would however continue to act as High Commissioner until bringing into force of Treaty and his rank as Ambassador would only become definite then.

No definite decision had been taken on this point and Secretary-General assured me that French Government would in any case only act in question of permanent representative after consultation with His Majesty's Government.

No. 126

Earl Curzon to Mr. Henderson (Paris)

*No. 960 Telegraphic [E 11114/10115/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 27, 1920, 5 p.m.

My telegram No. 945.¹

I am now informed by the Italian Ambassador that his Government have actually asked for and obtained the agreement of the Porte to appointment of an Ambassador. His Excellency has been informed that in the opinion of His Majesty's Government it is quite contrary to the spirit of friendly co-operation amongst the Powers that such a decision should have been taken without our knowledge and that of the French Government.

A little later the French Minister stated that Monsieur Millerand, who had learned of the action of the Italian Government, saw some advantage in the Representatives of the Powers having high rank to enable them to exercise authority over the various Commissions to be established at Constantinople and that in these circumstances the French Government would probably appoint an Ambassador.

You should at once see Monsieur Millerand and ascertain whether it is his considered view that the Allies must appoint Ambassadors forthwith and emphasize our objections to such a course. You should inform him at the same time that if he is prepared to support His Majesty's Government in holding out against what we regard as an absurd exaggeration of the importance of the post, we will do so and will bring the utmost pressure to bear upon the Italians.

¹ No. 124.

No. 127

Sir G. Buchanan (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received August 28, 11.45 a.m.)

*No. 363 Telegraphic [E 10572/10115/44]**

ROME, August 27, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 378 of 25th August.¹

Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I have just seen, said that Italian Ambassador at London had already discussed question with Lord Hardinge.² He contended that Italy had such important vested interests in Turkey that it was necessary for her to send an Ambassador to Constantinople, and that Signor Garroni would enter on his duties as Ambassador when once treaty had been ratified. On my protestations that Italy was bound to consult her Allies before taking such a step, his Excellency argued that if anyone was to blame it was His Majesty's Government, who are appointing a Minister there without informing Italian Government.³ Had they given him notice of their intention only to send a Minister he might have perhaps given way, but that now it was too late. I contended that Allied Governments were under a tacit understanding not to appoint Ambassadors to any enemy country without a previous agreement between themselves. He replied that this understanding had only referred to Berlin, and he believed that French Government proposed to send an Ambassador to Constantinople. The fact that [? of] our appointing Ambassadors to Constantinople must necessarily involve appointment of Turkish Ambassadors to Allied countries, and Turkey was too poor to do this. He would, he added, send me written answer.⁴

¹ No. 124.

² On Aug. 18.

³ See No. 119.

⁴ This reply, confirming Count Sforza's views, was summarized in Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 386 of Sept. 6, not printed.

No. 128

Note from Earl Curzon to M. de Fleuriau¹

*[E 10185/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 27, 1920

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 20th instant² to the effect (1) that the French Government proposes to entrust to the Conference of Ambassadors at Paris the decisions as to the execution of the Turkish Treaty; (2) that M. Millerand sees no objection to the immediate organisation of the 15,000 men provided for in the Turkish Treaty, subject to the authorisation of the inter-Allied commanders, who should satisfy themselves that these troops will not eventually join the Nationalist forces; and (3) that his Excellency does not object to the despatch

¹ Minister in the French Embassy in London.

² Not printed.

to Anatolia of an Ottoman mission to explain to the Nationalists the dangers of their attitude, nor to the use by this mission of the concerted statements of the Allied High Commissioners.

2. As regards the first point, His Majesty's Government consider that the execution of the treaty would best be regulated by ordinary diplomatic procedure centring in the Allied High Commissioners at Constantinople. This procedure seems to them likely to be more efficacious and expeditious than entrusting decisions as to the execution of the treaty to the Conference of Ambassadors, the existence of which, moreover, encourages the reference of questions to it, and thus creates unnecessary delay.

3. As regards the second and third points, I entirely share the views of M. Millerand, and, in the case of the third point, I have already signified my approval to a similar suggestion from the British High Commissioner at Constantinople.³

I have, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

³ See No. 113.

No. 129

Mr. Henderson (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received August 29, 10 a.m.)

No. 1037 Telegraphic [E 10585/10115/44]

PARIS, August 28, 1920, 7.40 p.m.

Your lordship's telegram No. 960 of August 27th.¹

French Government have so far received no official information as to intention of Italian Government to appoint Ambassador in Constantinople, though French High Commissioner there and French Ambassador at Rome have reported that this step was contemplated.

Latter stated Senator Garroni was personal friend of M. Giolitti, and that he would in all probability not remain more than six or eight months at Constantinople.

Secretary-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whom I saw in absence of President of the Council at Versailles, while fully concurring in language held to Italian Ambassador in London,² informed me that it was in fact the carefully considered view of M. Millerand that Allied representatives at Constantinople should eventually have ambassadorial rank. I emphasised objections of His Majesty's Government to this course, and laid stress on temporary nature of commissions of control, but M. Paléologue did not give me any indication that M. Millerand would be likely to reconsider the matter. He repeated arguments respecting financial importance of Turkey to France, and the multitude of vital questions, Straits, Greece, Bulgaria, Russia, Cilicia and Asia Minor, &c., that would have to be dealt with at Constantinople.

¹ No. 126.

² See No. 126.

M. Paléologue again assured me, however (see my telegram No. 1033 of August 27th),³ that French Government had no intention of appointing Ambassadors forthwith (see last paragraph of your telegram under reply), that Mr. Gregory's appointment,⁴ if finally decided upon, could not properly be made until after ratification of treaty.

It was on account of delay in this respect that it was proposed to give personal rank to M. DeFrance.

I pointed out that any announcement now of such promotion would be prejudicial to questions at issue, and he assured me that promotion would not be made public, and affected only internal administration of Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He undertook, subject to consent which he foresaw of M. Millerand, to join—if His Majesty's Government wished—in bringing pressure to bear at Rome against immediate appointment of Italian Ambassador, but held out no prospect of French support in resisting eventual nomination of Ambassadors.

³ No. 125.

⁴ This passage was amended on the filed copy to read: 'that such appointment'.

No. 130

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received August 29, 3.35 p.m.)

No. 972 Telegraphic [E 10576/10576/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, August 28, 1920, 9.50 p.m.

Following is translation of identic telegram from Allied High Commissioners to their Governments.

Begins.

As a result of repeated requests by Grand Vizier with a view to advance of funds, French, British and Italian High Commissioners have examined general financial situation of Turkish Government.

It appears from this examination that this situation is very precarious and even desperate; Turkey has been shorn of several provinces, taxes in Anatolia are collected by Kemalists, customs receipts, chief source of income still left, have dropped considerably in the last few months.

Government cannot therefore continue to maintain essential services, salaries of officials, pensions, etc.

There is a danger that prolongation and inevitable aggravation of this situation may give rise to discontent, disorders, disturbances, and final ruin of country. It is in the interests of Allies to prevent this.

Three High Commissioners therefore concur in submitting to Allied Governments following proposals:—

1. Facilitate procurement by Turkish Government of absolutely indispensable resources.

2. With this purpose permit Turks to alienate through Ottoman Bank or some other financial establishment a part of stocks of material and goods belonging to them but whose sale High Commissioners have prohibited as constituting a pledge for Allies.

3. . . .¹ Government a sum of £2,000,000 Turkish.

4. Make this permission conditional on acceptance by Government of a control over utilisation of sums so obtained.

5. Entrust this control to Administration of Public Debt which is at present alone in a position to exercise control. French, British and Italian representatives of Debt approve preceding statement of financial situation and are prepared to undertake this control if requested.

6. These proposals form only a palliative, to remedy for a short lapse of time grave situation described above. In view of need for taking without delay measures of a more definite character without any risk of conflict with views of future Financial Commission, High Commissioners express opinion that Allied Governments should appoint and immediately send to Constantinople their representatives on this Commission. These could at once acquaint themselves with situation and propose suitable measures while official constitution of Commission would await coming into force of Treaty.

High Commissioners urgently request an immediate reply.

Ends.

¹ The text is here uncertain. A pencilled suggestion on the filed copy reads: '? Loan to'.

No. 131

Earl Curzon to Mr. Henderson (Paris) and Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

*No. 2957¹ [E 10493/9075/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 1, 1920

Sir,

With a view to giving effect, without undue delay, to certain essential provisions of the Turkish Treaty of Peace, His Majesty's Government has had under consideration the question of the formation, and more especially the presidency, of the Inter-Allied Commissions to be set up under the treaty.

An Inter-Departmental Conference to discuss the question of the presidency of the Inter-Allied Commissions of Control and Organisation foreseen by Section IV was held at the Foreign Office on the 23rd August. A copy of the minutes of this meeting² is enclosed for your information and guidance. It will be seen that the Conference made the following recommendations:—

1. The General Officer Commanding Allied Forces of Occupation in the Demilitarised Zone and the president of the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control and Organisation should be one and the same person.

2. These two offices should be rotatory among the military representatives

¹ Despatch No. 2957 to Paris; No. 803 to Rome.

² Not printed.

of the three Powers providing the forces of occupation in the demilitarised zone, i.e., Great Britain, France and Italy.

3. The period for which these offices are to be held by each nation in turn should be fixed, if possible, at two years, but if this is found to be impossible His Majesty's Government should accept one year.

4. The president of the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control and Organisation, provided for by article 200 of the treaty, should for the first period be a British officer, who would at the same time be General Officer Commanding Inter-Allied Forces of Occupation in the Demilitarised Zone.

5. The president of the Naval Commission of Control (article 201 of the treaty) should preferably be an Italian, and that of the Air Commission (article 202 of the treaty) a Frenchman.

An argument in favour of the presidency being for two years instead of one is that the unsettled conditions in Anatolia would seem to render it inevitable that the enforcement of some of the clauses of the treaty should be a slower process than was at one time anticipated.

The reasons adduced in favour of the appointment of a British officer to the presidency of the Inter-Allied Military Commission are that (1) the burden of the war with Turkey fell almost exclusively on Great Britain, and (2) up till now in no single case has a British officer been appointed president of any of the Military Commissions of Control set up under the various treaties of peace negotiated with our late enemies, the Military Commissions of Control in Germany and Bulgaria being presided over by Frenchmen and those in Austria and Hungary by Italians.

The question of leaving this and similar decisions respecting the execution of the Turkish Treaty of Peace to the Conference of Ambassadors at Paris has been raised,³ but it appears to His Majesty's Government that on the whole the ordinary diplomatic channel would be the more expeditious and effective agency for dealing with these matters. The existence of such a body as the Conference of Ambassadors is calculated to encourage reference to it of the many points that must arise in connection with the putting into force of the various provisions of the Turkish Treaty, and much unnecessary delay would ensue.

You should bring the considerations set forth in this despatch to the notice of the French (Italian) Government, and report the result of your representations as soon as possible.⁴

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

³ Cf. No. 128.

⁴ Under cover of his despatch No. 2884 of Sept. 10 (not printed) Mr. Henderson transmitted to Lord Curzon a copy of the note which he had addressed to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in accordance with the foregoing instructions. He pointed out, however, that he had 'refrained from specifying, as regards the Naval and Air Commissions, to which of those two Commissions it is proposed to assign a French or an Italian president'. He explained that it had been agreed between the French and Italian representatives on the Inter-Allied Military Committee in Paris that, if the presidency of the Turkish Military Commission were assigned to a British officer, 'a French officer should have the presidency

of the Naval Commission—being the next in importance—and an Italian officer that of the Air Commission . . . the French Government would be greatly hurt if the only presidency assigned to a French officer were that of the least important (Air) Commission’.

No. 132

*Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome) and Admiral Sir J. de Robeck
(Constantinople)*

No. 808¹ [E 10154/2569/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 3, 1920

Sir,

I have to bring to your knowledge a recent offer to mediate peace between His Majesty's Government and Mustafa Kemal. The emissary was a young Roumanian named François Stern, who during the war was employed by His Majesty's Government, not very satisfactorily, on intelligence work in South Russia and Roumania and who has latterly been living in Switzerland in close touch with Turkish circles.

2. M. Stern came over from Switzerland and called at this Department on the 13th ultimo. He explained that he had always been conversant with Turkish affairs having been on a visit to Constantinople with his family in 1911 and that he had been approached by one Subhi Bey, an emissary of Mustafa Kemal's, who was at that time in Switzerland, with proposals which he felt to be very much to the advantage of His Majesty's Government.

3. The terms which, according to M. Stern, Subhi Bey was authorized by Mustafa Kemal to make, were in brief the following:

- (1) Mustafa Kemal renounced all claim to Thrace;
- (2) Turkey should be given an assured outlet at Smyrna;
- (3) Greek troops should be removed from Turkey and replaced, if at all, by Italians;
- (4) The Straits should be controlled, if at all, by Great Britain;
- (5) Mustafa Kemal would welcome British technical advisers;
- (6) Damad Ferid Pasha should resign;
- (7) Great Britain should, in general, cease to support the Greeks;
- (8) Mustafa Kemal would disband his forces and surrender his arms;
- (9) Mustafa Kemal would stop anti-British propaganda now going on in Egypt, India, Mesopotamia and elsewhere;
- (10) Mustafa Kemal would cease intriguing with the Italian Government.

4. M. Stern urged that we should have to make terms with Mustafa Kemal some day and that we could do so much more profitably through him now than if, as we otherwise should be obliged to—we negotiated later through the Italians or through Feisal.

¹ Despatch No. 808 to Rome; No. 701 to Constantinople.

5. M. Stern's practical proposal was that he should go to Angora with Subhi Bey. He asked that Jelal Nuri and Fethi Bey might be released from Malta to accompany him, since they carried great weight with Mustafa Kemal. He did not, however, explain why he supposed that the influence of Jelal Nuri and Fethi would be on the side of peace.

6. M. Stern laid great stress on the close relations between the Italians and Turks. All communications, he said, between Mustafa Kemal and his sympathisers in Europe passed through Italy. The Italian Government were strengthened in this pro-Turkish policy by the Vatican, for the Vatican was anxious to use all means at its disposal in order to counter the activities of the Orthodox Patriarchate, which was now deriving great support from the Hellenic Government. M. Stern indeed (he stated that he was himself a Catholic) went so far as to say that the propaganda organisation of the Vatican, which was very efficient, proceeded to promote Sinn Fein disturbances in Ireland a year ago when the presence of the Greeks in Constantinople became a serious possibility.

7. M. Stern stated that he and Subhi Bey could not possibly proceed to Angora by way of Italy since the Italians must not know of their mission. And by way of further emphasizing the close connection between Mustafa Kemal and the Italian Government he explained that Subhi Bey is a relative of Ahmed Dimo, an Albanian who is Mustafa Kemal's emissary in Rome. Ahmed Dimo, he added, has been an intimate of Count Sforza ever since Count Sforza allowed him to take refuge in the Italian Embassy upon one occasion when he was wanted by Abdul Hamid.

8. M. Stern explained that he had no credentials since in order to avoid arousing Italian suspicions all communications on this subject (which had passed through Italy) had been verbal.

9. M. Stern endeavoured to enlist the support of the War Office and of Mr. Philip Kerr, the Prime Minister's private secretary. In each case he was told that while peace with Mustafa Kemal was desirable, acceptance of the Treaty by Mustafa Kemal was a necessary preliminary and from both of these quarters he was referred to this Department.

10. Apart from M. Stern's personality, which commanded little confidence, it appeared to me to be out of the question to consider the terms which he proposed. They amounted, as you will observe, to nothing less than throwing over the Treaty which we have signed and the Greeks upon whom enforcement of the Treaty must in such a large measure rest. In spite, therefore, of his repeated requests for an interview with Sir John Tilley, M. Stern was received only by a subordinate member of this Department, and after due consultation with the Prime Minister's private secretary and with the War Office, M. Stern was informed that the only answer which could be given to his communication was that Mustafa Kemal must accept the Treaty and the authority of the Sultan.

11. The mission of M. Stern, it may therefore be hoped, has led to nothing. But I have thought it worth while to inform you of the occurrence, firstly because it was perhaps not unconnected with Italian policy in the Near East,

and secondly because it may be anticipated that the Turks will confront His Majesty's Government with other such attempts to evade the obligations of the Treaty.

I am, &c.²

² Signature missing on filed copy.

No. 133

Earl Curzon to Sir C. Eliot¹ (Tokyo)

*No. 298 Telegraphic [E 10957/10115/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 7, 1920, 7 p.m.*

My telegram No. 286 of 25th August² and your telegram No. 336 of 4th September.³

Inform Japanese Government, in deference to considerations put forward by our French and Italian Allies, based mainly on the importance of the various Commissions of Control (financial, Straits, &c.), it is now proposed that the Allied representatives at Constantinople should be of the rank of Ambassador.

As regards Turkish representation in Allied capitals pending the coming into force of the Turkish Treaty, the French Government and His Majesty's Government have agreed, and it is hoped the Italian attitude will be identic, that Turkey should have an unofficial agent without the title of *Chargé d'Affaires*.

¹ H.M. Ambassador at Tokyo.

² No. 124.

³ Not printed. This reported that the Japanese Government agreed with the views of H.M.G. but had never had representatives in Turkey.

No. 134

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

*No. 409 Telegraphic [E 10985/10115/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 7, 1920, 11 p.m.*

Your telegram of 6th September¹ and my telegram No. 814 of 4th September to Constantinople, repeated to you as No. 405.²

As His Majesty's Government and the French Government are withholding the title of *Chargé d'Affaires* to the Turkish unofficial agent pending the ratification, you should urge on the Italian Government the desirability of acting similarly; moreover, a *Chargé d'Affaires* implies the full resumption of diplomatic relations.

¹ This had reported that the Italian Government had informed the Grand Vizier that they had no objection to the despatch of a Turkish *Chargé d'Affaires* to Rome.

² Not printed.

No. 135

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received September 12, 9.50 p.m.)

No. 1003 Telegraphic [E 11266/10576/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, September 10, 1920, 1.45 p.m.

My telegram No. 972.¹

Financial situation has during past ten days been principal pre-occupation of Turkish Government. It looks as if breaking point had at last been reached. Government was not able to make any special issue of salary for Bayram festival (on) August 26th and is without means of paying (? Government) salaries and pensions due August 31st.

Monthly requirements are about £1,300,000 Turkish. Money in hand on August 31st was about £500,000 Turkish. Expedients suggested for making up difference show how desperate is plight of Government.

I have reported, in my despatch No. 1242/W/1041 of September 3rd,² on their appeal to be allowed to use £440,000 Turkish odd in gold deposited with Ottoman Bank and originally intended for service of internal loan. They are casting about in other directions as well, but wherever they look they are confronted with obstacles arising out of terms of treaty or else attitude of Allies during armistice.

It is of course not (the first) time that salaries have been a month in arrear. Difference now is that few officials have much to fall back on and Government have no eventual credit, besides which situation gives handle to numerous enemies of present Government or any other Government desiring to see treaty of peace through. Grand Vizier takes gloomiest view of situation and general opinion is that breakdown of machinery of Government is really in sight.

French Government have authorized my French Colleague to consent to disposal of stocks mentioned in my telegram under reference provided control over (? Government) finances as a whole is vested provisionally in public debt administration. Situation is so serious that I may find myself obliged to follow suit without awaiting instructions from you. Both Ottoman Bank and National Bank however have formed low opinion of value of stocks and relief obtainable in this way will at best be rapidly exhausted.

We may find in near future that only alternative to collapse of administration machine, which would react disastrously on Allies, is for Allies themselves to advance money or guarantee advance by Banks to tide over period until Financial Commission has got situation in hand. I beg Your Lordship to consider this possibility bearing in mind (a) repercussion in Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and other neighbouring countries if it became impossible for a Government willing to accept Treaty to subsist in Constantinople and (b) danger to British financial and commercial interests if France and Italy

¹ No. 130.

² Received Sept. 14, not printed.

or even Greece were to be enabled to pave the way for acquiring a privileged position in regard to financial control of Turkey by individual action to which we might have difficulty in refusing consent after ourselves refusing to participate.

Imminent reduction of British and French military forces here is strong additional reason for averting collapse of Government and possibility of consequent disorder.

No. 136

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received September 12, 10 p.m.)

*No. 1004 Telegraphic [E 11247/3/44]**

Confidential

CONSTANTINOPLE, September 10, 1920, 6.45 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Political aspect of situation also deserves attention.

Effect of financial crisis may be to make Damad Ferid's already difficult position completely untenable. There is tendency in some quarters to consider this so desirable in itself as to justify postponement of relief until Ferid has been squeezed out of office.

Many persons, including some in high financial circles, take view that Ferid should be got rid of at once or else induced to ratify treaty quickly, and then made to give place to Tewfik Pasha or even Izzet Pasha. My French colleague took latter view some days ago and now takes former. He would like me to join him in positive action designed to compel Ferid's resignation. He lays great stress on necessity for composition between Central Government and Anatolia, and on fact that Ferid's personality is one of greatest obstacle to such composition.

I attach little importance to Ferid's retention of office, especially in view of obvious absence of desire on part of His Majesty's Government to acquire preponderant position here. There is widespread idea that we are keeping Ferid in office for our own purposes, and as in reality we are giving him no support at all, both he and we are in false position which would be terminated by his disappearance.

On the other hand, two things are very desirable, viz.:—

1. That treaty should be ratified by act of Sultan; and
2. That Central Government seeking rapprochement with Anatolia should do so with sincere intention of securing adhesion of Anatolia to treaty, not of playing into the hands of Nationalists.

I find it difficult at present to foresee any combination of Ministers on which complete reliance could be placed for these two purposes. Nor is it easy to see how anyone can form Government even moderately stable without assurance of support from Allies, which Allies will not give. No Turkish Government can live on threats of further punishment alone.

¹ No. 135.

For time being I am slow to fall in with French High Commissioner's suggestion. My future course must depend on developments. If events of themselves force Ferid to resign I shall not particularly regret it; but I have very little idea what is likely to come after. Perhaps a Grand Vizier who has French support might receive financial assistance required from Ottoman Bank under a French Government guarantee.

No. 137

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 845 Telegraphic [E 10846/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 16, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 965.¹

Creation of Turkish Gendarmerie seems to His Majesty's Government a matter of urgency. Pending the appointment of the Allied Commissions of Control, which we are endeavouring to hasten, please concert with your Colleagues, whose Governments are being requested to send them similar instructions,² in any preliminary steps that may be found possible. These preliminaries might be undertaken, pending the arrival of the Commissions, by the Allied Military Authorities in collaboration with the Turkish Government or in such other manner as you and your colleagues may consider suitable.

Repeated to Paris No. 1015 and Rome No. 433.

¹ Of Aug. 27, not printed.

² In telegram No. 1016 to Paris and No. 434 to Rome (of Sept. 16, not printed) Lord Curzon instructed Lord Derby and Mr. Kennard to approach the French and Italian Governments respectively with a view to their sending such instructions.

No. 138

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 860 Telegraphic [E 11377/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 17, 1920, 9.17 p.m.*

War Office report¹ that messages have reached General Wilson, through a Turk at Angora, from General Kiazim Pasha ex-sub Chief of Staff² suggesting an interview with Van Millingen or some other officer at a place on Black Sea Coast with a view to seeking an undertaking between the moderate Nationalists and the Turkish Government.

Such an understanding, if based on acceptance of the terms of the Treaty, would seem desirable. You should consult with General Wilson who knows the details and take such action as you may deem advisable.

¹ In a letter of Sept. 14, not printed.

² Lord Curzon wrote in a minute: 'This Pasha is I understand an anti-Kemalist and a Pro-Ally.'

No. 139

Letter from Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

[Confidential/General/363/20]

Secret

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 19, 1920

My dear Admiral,

I am much obliged for your personal letter of September 2 *re* the Sultan's son and the Constitution.¹ Your attitude and views are, in my opinion, quite correct. No doubt there must be a change in the Constitution. But for the moment it is not for us to indicate what it should be.

The effect upon the Khalifate has to be carefully considered.

I wish I could find time to write personally to you and our other leading representatives abroad. But, if I were to attempt this, I should find leisure for little else, since every place is a storm-centre and our representative there a pivot.

The unexpected and disloyal action of the Italians in making Garroni an Ambassador has compelled me reluctantly to alter our plans, and to substitute for Max Muller (for whose disappointment I feel keenly) an official of higher rank. I hope to nominate him shortly.² But in the meantime it is very good of you to continue your labours, anxious and trying as they cannot fail to be.

Yours sincerely,

CURZON

¹ Not printed. In this letter Admiral de Robeck had referred to 'Ferid Pasha's proposal to engage an English tutor for the Sultan's son' and 'idea of altering the order of succession', which 'would involve a change of the Constitution'. The Grand Vizier had gone on to expatiate 'on the need for . . . an entirely new Constitution more adapted to the intellectual and political development of the people'. The Admiral had been 'careful not to be drawn into any expression of opinion, and merely promised to think the matter over': but he told Lord Curzon that it was 'obvious that . . . Ferid Pasha's suggestion that the Sultan should supersede the Constitution now technically in force by a new one is reactionary, and it would be a mistake at the present time to give him the smallest ground for claiming that it had the approval of the British Government'. He added that it was 'equally obvious that the maintenance in anything but form of the present Constitution is irreconcilable with a peace treaty which deprives Turkey of so many sovereign prerogatives, and that adjustments will have to be made sooner or later . . . if the treaty stands'.

² Sir Horace Rumbold, at that time H.M. Minister at Warsaw, was on Nov. 1, 1920, appointed H.M. Ambassador at Constantinople with the title of High Commissioner pending the resumption of normal diplomatic relations with Turkey.

No. 140

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 869 Telegraphic [E 11598/10576/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 20, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 1027 (of the 17th September¹ Financial situation of Turkey. Sale of material).

¹ Not printed. In this Admiral de Robeck reported that his 'French and Italian colleagues are now both (? authorised to) assent to disposal of stores up to two million *lira* Turkish on condition of financial control by Council of Ottoman Public Debt'.

No sale of Turkish War material can take place at present. See my telegram No. 865.² In view of low opinion formed by the Ottoman and National Banks of the value of stocks, as reported in your telegram No. 1003,³ please ascertain and report the nature and value of stores other than war material, to the disposal of which your Allied colleagues are authorised to assent.

² No. 141.

³ No. 135.

No. 141

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 865 Telegraphic [E 11374/11374/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 21, 1920, 2.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1040.¹

War Office had already communicated to me copy of a telegram received from General Officer Commanding Black Sea regarding a proposed joint Note to the Porte, which you had submitted to him for his approval laying down the principles governing sale of war material in accordance with Articles 173 and 236 of the Treaty.²

But as the Treaty only permits disposal of Turkish war material by the Military Inter-Allied Commission of Control, no sale can take place at present without infringement of the Treaty, which I cannot sanction.

¹ Of Sept. 17, not printed.

² This telegram I 9179 of Aug. 26 from G.H.Q., Constantinople (not printed), outlined the proposed joint note as follows: 'Reference to clauses 173 and 236 of Peace ? Treaty. Government material may be sold subject to following principles. 1. There is no objection to sale, under allied control, of material surplus to quantity allowed to remain in Government hands but proceeds of sale to be at disposal of Allied High Commissioner. 2. There is no objection to sale of article *not* war material, but proceeds of sale to be at disposal of Allied Finance Commission. 3. All sales of Government property after being subject to approval of Allied High Commissioners to be in public market.'

No. 142

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received September 24, 2.10 p.m.)

*No. 1050 Telegraphic [E 11837/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *September 23, 1920, 4.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 1047 of 23rd September.¹

Immediately after resignation of Sheikh-ul-Islam and Minister of Commerce² Grand Vizier published communiqué accusing them of having

¹ Not printed.

² These two Ministers, who had resigned on Sept. 19, belonged to the moderate *Entente libérale* party and were described in Admiral de Robeck's telegram No. 1047 as 'principal advocates in Cabinet of repression of Nationalist movement by force'.

delayed measures to restore order in Anatolia by refusing to agree to renewal of amnesty in favour of all except leaders of Nationalist movement, which remainder of Cabinet agreed to in considering necessary as preliminary measure. Communiqué states that amnesty is now renewed on condition of submission within ten days.

At the same time Grand Vizier addressed note to High Commissioners containing lengthy review of situation and formulating following desiderata:—

1. 15,000 troops and 25,000 gendarmes to be recruited in small area under effective authority of Government and area occupied by Greek vedettes ceded to them.

2. Guns and material held by Allies since armistice to be placed at disposal of Government.

3. Naval convoys for transports carrying Government troops.

4. Military foreign officers for gendarmerie and other services, as contemplated in treaty.

5. Loan by Allies of £ T. 25,000,000, being estimated cost of three months' operations with margin for unforeseen expenses.

Note speaks of further appeal for Allied capital for reconstruction purposes, and recognises that Turkish expenditure must be controlled by public debtor [*sic*] or Financial Commission if it can be instituted in time.

Note concludes with outline of elaborate scheme for reorganisation of whole administration of Turkey, which only awaits Imperial sanction.

High Commissioners met on 21st September to consider this communication. They agreed on obvious conclusion that note is not practical to last degree. They decided to inform Grand Vizier that they could only refer it to their Governments, but to seize opportunity of approaching Grand Vizier with a proposal for mission of pacification to Anatolia which was approved of in your telegram No. 717 of 4th August³ and has since hung fire. There is as yet no agreement amongst High Commissioners to exact form or scope of action of this mission, and it was decided that French High Commissioner should broach proposal to Grand Vizier verbally and in general terms only. Grand Vizier replied that, in effect, purely Turkish mission, unsupported by force, would produce no effect, but that there might be some advantage in mission accompanied by Allied representatives. High Commissioners met again on 22nd September. I said that rather than abandon attempt at conciliation I would be disposed to agree to send Allied representatives with Turkish mission.

My French colleague demurs to idea of giving mission character of formal negotiations with Nationalist leaders. My Italian colleague was loath to commit himself on any question of detail, as he said that last news that he had from Rome was that Italian Government had informed British and French Governments that they favoured idea of mission, but thought it would be more productive of result if it were composed, or at least

³ No. 113.

accompanied by, Allied delegates.⁴ After much discussion, it was agreed, at my suggestion, that each High Commissioner should put up written suggestions regarding precise mode of action, with a view to further discussion on 24th September.

I will send communiqué and note in reference to above by King's messenger.⁵

⁴ For this Italian note of Sept. 17, cf. No. 149 below.

⁵ A copy of the Grand Vizier's note to the High Commissioners was received in the Foreign Office on Oct. 5 as enclosure in Constantinople despatch No. 1339 of Sept. 24, not printed. No copy of the communiqué has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

No. 143

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 880 Telegraphic [E 11271/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 23, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your despatch No. 1086,¹ paragraph 13 of enclosure.

His Majesty's Government have no objection to Grand Vizier's raising the forces at his disposal to 15,000 without awaiting the installation of the Inter-Allied Military Commission of Control for which the Inter-Allied Commanders can act provisionally.

(Repeated to Paris No. 1036, to Rome No. 444.)

¹ Of Aug. 2, not printed. This enclosed a 'Note of proceedings of Meeting of High Commissioners held at Admiral de Robeck's request at French High Commission, on 29th July 1920'.

No. 144

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 11)

No. 1349 [E 12474/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, *September 28, 1920*

My Lord,

With reference to my most recent telegrams relative to the position of the Turkish Government and the Allied High Commissioners here in regard to the Nationalist movement in Anatolia,¹ I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum in which the 2nd Political Officer of this High Commission has essayed to present a connected view of the situation and to examine it with special reference to the question of what, if any, action can usefully be taken to deal with it.

2. I agree generally with Mr. Ryan's presentation of the situation. As

¹ See, e.g., No. 142.

regards the action to be taken, I am of opinion that, however small may be the chance of terminating the present state of affairs in Anatolia, and securing acceptance of the Peace Treaty by the purely pacific expedient of sending a mission to represent the true facts of Turkey's present position to everyone concerned, an attempt to do so should be made. In forming this opinion, I have been greatly influenced by the consideration that, even with the whole-hearted support of the Allies, it would be impossible for the Turkish Government to organise a force adequate to repress the Nationalists and to restore order in Anatolia without months of preparation, and that any attempt to organise such a force without the support of the Allies, including considerable financial aid, would be entirely futile.

3. The situation has unfortunately developed, since Mr. Ryan's memorandum was written, on lines unfavourable to the project of despatching such a mission. I succeeded on September 24th, as reported in my telegram No. 105[8] of September 25th,² in inducing my French Colleague to agree to the proposal that the High Commissioners should promote the despatch by the Sultan of a mission which should be accompanied by Allied representatives and which should be prepared to treat with the Nationalist leaders. The next step was to arrive at the best method of broaching the subject to the Nationalists on the one hand, and on the other to bring it to a head with the Grand Vizier, who was understood from the preliminary conversations not to be [[?]un]favourable to the sending of a mission provided it was accompanied by Allied representatives.

4. The Grand Vizier took a very different line when the Political Officers of the High Commission called on him on September 25th with the latter object. He said he had never contemplated the substitution of a mission for repressive measures, or the despatch of a mission to treat with the leaders whom six months ago the Turkish Government had, under strong Allied pressure, denounced as rebels and outlaws. He defined his attitude as being that a mission might serve a useful purpose subject to 3 conditions, viz.:—

- (a) that the organisation of repressive forces should be concurrently proceeded with,
- (b) that the mission should be accompanied by Allied representatives; and
- (c) that the mission should have no truck with the criminal authors of the Kemalist movement.

5. Your Lordship will not fail to perceive how much this attitude has in common with that taken up by my French colleague up to September 24th. The subsequent situation is somewhat ludicrous, as M. Defrance considers it essential to drive Damad Ferid Pasha from office, as a preliminary to the execution of a programme which he agrees with the Pasha in considering the only sound course of action, while I find myself in disagreement with both, yet hesitate, for reasons which I have reported, to take any action calculated to precipitate the Grand Vizier's fall.³

² Not printed.

³ See No. 136.

6. I am studying the best means of emerging from this deadlock, and will continue to report developments by telegraph.⁴

I have, &c.,

J. M. DE ROBECK,
High Commissioner

⁴ Lord Hardinge minuted: 'This has been already discussed in the Cabinet. No decision as to a Greek advance [referred to in Mr. Ryan's memorandum] was taken, the question having been deferred till further information has been obtained from the General Staff. H.'

ENCLOSURE IN No. 144

Memorandum by Mr. Ryan respecting the Nationalist Movement in Anatolia.

CONSTANTINOPLE, *September 23, 1920*

We are now definitely confronted with two immediate issues, namely, whether we should take active hand in maintaining or changing the present Turkish Government, and whether we should attempt the unification of Turkey.

2. The main factors in the situation are as follows:—

The Peace Treaty, which all Turks regard as harsh and unjust, but which some regard as the only alternative to complete ruin, while others think it may still be combated;

The Constantinople Government, which exercises little real authority, and which is practically bankrupt;

The Nationalists in the Interior, who are reputed to be weakened by internal dissensions, and by their failure to make good in face of the Greek advance;

The Greeks, in shining armour, ready, militarily, to advance, but unwilling, politically, to do so except at a price;

His Majesty's Government, whose policy is undeclared, but who to outward seeming are anxious only to curtail liabilities in this country;

The French, who seem to be divided into two camps, according as they desire to batten on a restored, though reduced, Turkey, or to deprive the Turks of the power to hurt them in Syria, Cilicia and Heraclea;

The Italians, who see both political and economic interest in upholding Turkey, and who 'suck up' to the Turks generally, primarily to the Nationalists, secondarily, so far as the two things are compatible, to the Constantinople Government; and

The Kurds.

3. There are of course many minor factors, and many remoter ones, and there are many subdivisions of those enumerated above.

4. *The Constantinople Government* derives what little authority it does possess from the Sultan, and from the illusion that it enjoys Allied, especially British, support. The secession of the two leading representatives of the 'Moderate Entente Libérale' within the last few days⁵ deprives it of its last claim to be

⁵ See No. 142.

regarded as more than the personal Government of Ferid Pacha. Ferid Pacha, already unpopular, and deserted by his few remaining supporters among the active politicians, can only retain power either by convincing the Sultan that the above illusion is a reality, and thereby securing the continued confidence of at least the Sultan, or by converting the illusion into a reality, and thereby again widening the circle of his supporters.

5. *The Nationalists* were reported two or three months ago to be riven by dissensions of a fundamental kind. All recent reports seem to me, however, to tend to two conclusions, namely, that the leaders, however divided, are all equally irreconcilable to the Peace Treaty in its present form, and that, while varying in their attitude towards Bolshevism as a social system, they are at one in looking to the Bolsheviks for support in present trouble.

6. The other main factors have been sufficiently described above, except *the Kurds*, whose importance is apt to be underrated. Many of them are politically undistinguishable from Turks, and these are mainly under Nationalist influence. The rest are in varying degrees votaries of Kurdish national aspirations, and proportionately anti-Turkish. These are of course disunited, but if carefully handled by His Majesty's Government they might be used as a counterpoise to Kemalism, Bolshevism, and forces of sheer disorder. We have to reckon with the fact that they are just now very disgruntled, because of the limitation on the area assigned to Kurdistan by the Treaty, the inclusion of a large part even of that area in the French zone of influence, and above all the uncertainty as to their future frontier with Armenia. The one thing which unites all Kurds is hatred of the idea of Armenian domination in Kurdish districts, and they regard the Americans who are to delimit the frontier as a mixture of ignorance of the East and fanatical pro-Christianism.

7. If the appreciation in paragraph 5 of the Nationalist leaders is correct, the Allies must choose between yielding to them over the Treaty or fighting them in some way or other. Assuming that the Treaty is to stand, or, if modified, is to be modified only to the disadvantage of the Turks, the first alternative is excluded. If the second be chosen there are three and only three ways of fighting the Nationalist leaders. The first is by direct action of the Allied Great Powers; the second is by further utilisation of the Greeks; the third is by utilisation of such Turkish elements as are prepared to accept the Treaty as a necessary evil.

8. Direct action by the Powers is excluded. The Italians are adverse to the object with which such action might be undertaken, viz. the destruction of the Nationalist organisation. The French are divided regarding it. His Majesty's Government are unwilling to put money or men into an adventure in Anatolia.

9. The further utilisation of the Greeks cannot be resorted to consistently with the maintenance of the Treaty in its present shape. The Greeks must be rewarded for further effort, perhaps by an extended Smyrna area, perhaps by Constantinople, perhaps by a Pontine Republic. The further utilisation of the Greeks is also open to other objections, including that of increased danger for Christians outside areas effectively occupied.

10. If, then, we desire the Treaty to stand in its present form, the only hope, and that a faint one, lies in utilising the Turkish elements which are ready to resign themselves to it. This the present Turkish Government ask us to do. They say we made them sign a Treaty, the penalty for the non-execution is stated, but we stand in the way of every endeavour to render its execution possible. They submit military plans for our approval and we receive them in silence, though it needs but a little force in the background to encourage all Anatolia to go anti-Nationalist. They are ready for immediate financial control, and we dilly-dally over instituting it, while in the meantime we block every way by which Turkey might hope to raise money.

11. As a variant on this last alternative, it is suggested that the Nationalist organisation can be broken up by taking steps to bring the realities of Turkey's desperate plight to the knowledge of Anatolia generally, and isolating the leaders to such an extent as to render them impotent. This suggestion rests on the theory that the mass of people are sick and tired of Nationalists, that the active opposition to them in many localities needs only a little encouragement to become really effective, and that the class intermediate between the big Nationalist leaders and the sheep-like peasants are moderate and lukewarm enough to be easily detached from the irreconcilables in present circumstances.

12. Six weeks ago the position was that the High Commissioners favoured the view just described and considered that useful results might be obtained by getting the Turkish Government to send a mission of pacification to Anatolia.⁶ Ferid Pacha, whom I then sounded, was dead against this. The Ministers who have just resigned have also always declared themselves dead against conciliation, unsupported by force, in any form, and their chief declared grievance against Ferid is that he takes no serious action in regard to the Anatolian situation. Their real motives are obscure, and their enemies say that they have been got at by the Italians, with a politico-financial programme of which the notorious Salonika Jew, Carasso, is the exponent. It is useless to try to fathom the mud in which nearly all the politicians of Constantinople are wallowing. All that is necessary is to glance at the present position in regard to the conciliation proposals.

13. Ferid Pacha's first moves after the resignations were to renew the offer of an amnesty to all Nationalists except the leaders, and to address a long note to the High Commissioners,⁷ in which he put forward elaborate military proposals, asked for a loan of £12,000,000, and outlined a grandiose scheme of administrative reform, which he had been hatching for some little time past. This note has a double character. It is doubtless intended to show his own people that he does stand for serious action in Anatolia, and that it is the Allies who block the way. It is also a formal call upon the Allies to support the Turkish Government in every way, if they want the Turkish Government to execute their Treaty.

14. The High Commissioners have met this by informing Ferid Pacha

⁶ See No. 113, n. 1.

⁷ See No. 142.

verbally that they favour the sending of a mission to Anatolia to attempt to bring it into line with Constantinople. Ferid rejoins by saying that a purely Turkish mission without force behind it would be futile, but that a mission accompanied by Allied representatives would have a good chance of success.

15. The High Commissioners are not agreed as to the nature and scope of the Mission to Anatolia. The most definite attitude is that of M. Defrance, who favours a Turkish mission, which would proceed gradually with a certain force accompanying it, and would rally the people to their allegiance to the Sultan, advancing only as and when the collapse of the Nationalists in each successive district made it possible. He maintains strongly, however, that for this to succeed Ferid Pacha must disappear. He does not seem to realise how much his proposal has in common with what Ferid Pacha has been urging on us, and how great the practical difficulties would be.

16. However his views may be evolving otherwise, M. Defrance is firm on one point, viz. that the disappearance of Ferid is a first condition of *any* scheme for winning moderate nationalists back to submission. For the rest, he is lukewarm about any form of negotiations with the Nationalist leaders themselves, and equally lukewarm about using boldly the only threat which the Allies can use, viz. that of a further Greek advance. He admits that that is the Allies' only eventual weapon, but he is very reluctant that it should be used.

17. The Italian Acting High Commissioner tells us that his Government have signified to Paris and London their concurrence in the proposal that a mission should be sent to Anatolia, but have suggested that it would have a better chance of success if composed of Allied delegates or if, at least, it were accompanied by Allied Delegates.⁷ M. Arlotta is slow to move beyond the bare suggestion that a mission should be sent, until he hears further from Rome.

18. Such is the setting in which we have to face the two issues stated in paragraph 1. Are we to drive Ferid Pacha from power? And what practical form are we to give to the project of a mission to Anatolia, which is at present too amorphous to be realisable unless the High Commissioners can agree on a detailed proposal?

19. Ferid's resignation would clear the air and end what is in many ways a false position. There is, however, no Government in sight which would appeal more to the Nationalists and of which we could be certain that it would nevertheless stand sincerely for the Peace Treaty. I am therefore averse from positive action to drive Ferid from office. If the current in favour of doing so proves too strong, or if he resigns of himself under the pressure of circumstances, I think the only hope for the future would lie in a Tewfik Government, but only if we could make sure that it would not be dominated by Nationalist influences, that Tewfik Pacha realised that no modification of the Treaty favourable to Turkey was to be looked for, and that the sooner he ratified the Treaty the better it would be. Izzet Pacha's candidature is being boomed in several quarters, perhaps under high financial inspiration. I cannot believe that he would really stand for the Peace Treaty.

20. As for the mission to Anatolia, I share the view that no Turkish mission whether sent by Ferid or by another is likely to effect anything unless it is amenable to Nationalist wishes, i.e., modification of the Treaty. A mission with Allied Representatives might conceivably effect something, if the Allied delegates were empowered to use more or less definite threats of forward Allied action, in the event of continued resistance by the Nationalists. Even in this case, however, the hopes of success would be very slight.

21. The crux of the whole matter is to my mind the question whether His Majesty's Government want the Treaty to stand or not. If they do not, I see no better course than to let the situation 'rip' and go from bad to worse, as it is bound to do. This is a gloomy prospect, because even the Greeks cannot overrun the whole of Anatolia, and beyond the limits of effective occupation the nationalist movement must either remain in being as an organised force, or, in dissolving, leave behind it widespread disorder. We cannot suppose that, *pari passu* with the disintegration of the movement, the Constantinople Government, weak as it is, would automatically regain its authority.

22. If, however, we do want the Treaty to stand, I repeat that I see no hope except in artificially strengthening the Turkish Government, by giving it strong Allied support including financial help in some shape.

23. As a preliminary, the mission of conciliation might be tried, but no great hope should be founded on it, and it should be realised that its failure should be followed either by what is suggested in the immediately preceding paragraph or by letting loose the Greeks.

A. RYAN

No. 145

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 908 Telegraphic [E 11862/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 30, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1058 of 25th September, final paragraph.¹

Of course His Majesty's Government desire execution of the treaty as signed.

With regard to the despatch of a mission to Anatolia, we consider that, if possible, ratification of the treaty by Turkey should precede the mission, and we have so informed French and Italian Governments. But we realise that this may not be practicable, and we are prepared to endorse alternative policy if you and your colleagues decide upon it.

Despatch follows.²

¹ Not printed (cf. No. 144, para. 3). The final paragraph read as follows: 'I am assuming that His Majesty's Government do wish settlement contained in present treaty to hold good and not to be modified if it can be avoided either in favour of Greeks or Turks.'

² See No. 149 below, n. 4.

No. 146

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 3257 [*E 10924/9075/44*]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, September 30, 1920

My Lord,

With reference to your despatch No. 2942 of the 17th September,¹ I have to inform you that His Majesty's Government have recently had under consideration the question of the authority of the various commissions to be set up at Constantinople under the terms of the Turkish treaty, and have approved the principle of placing these commissions, with certain exceptions, under the general authority of the Allied Ambassadors or representatives at Constantinople. This would apply to the Military, Naval, Air, Kurdish and Financial Commissions, with the exception, in the latter case, of purely financial questions which would be outside the competence of the Allied Ambassadors, and would require reference to the supreme financial authorities in the Allied countries. It would appear to His Majesty's Government that the Straits Commission must be independent of the Allied Ambassadors as a body, though, as in the case of the other commissions, the British Commissioner would be under the general authority of the British Ambassador or representative. The Arbitral Commission is to be appointed by the Council of the League of Nations, and will consequently be independent of the Allied representatives at Constantinople.

I have to request your Lordship to take an early opportunity of bringing the above views of His Majesty's Government to the notice of the French Government, and of expressing the hope that they will concur therein, and will agree to the adoption of the principle of subordinating the commissions to the general authority of the Allied Ambassadors or representatives.²

A similar despatch is being addressed to Rome.³

I am, &c.

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

¹ Not printed.

² Cf. No. 167 below, n. 2.

³ Despatch No. 910 of Sept. 30, not printed.

No. 147

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 3, 9 a.m.)

No. 1065 *Telegraphic* [*E 12184/3/44*]*

Secret

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 1, 1920, 1 a.m.

My telegram No. 1064 of 1st October.¹

Ferid has inkling of what is coming. He is concerned for personal safety of himself, Sultan, and persons identified with his policy in event of advent

¹ No. 148 below. These telegrams were despatched in reverse order.

to power of Government of a Nationalist complexion. I trust I may be authorised to tell him that His Majesty's Government would not tolerate any action against his person or that of the Sultan in any such eventuality.

No. 148

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 4, 10.15 a.m.)

*No. 1064 Telegraphic [E 12183/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 1, 1920, 1.10 p.m.

My telegram No. 1058 of 25th September.¹

Political officers visited Grand Vizier on 25th September and communicated proposal of High Commissioners. Grand Vizier took more hostile line than was expected in view of preliminary conversations some days before. He said that, in welcoming proposal for mission accompanied by Allied representatives, he had not intended to supersede his own earlier proposal. He summed up his attitude as follows:—

1. Conciliatory methods cannot usefully be employed to produce settlement in Anatolia unless organisation of means of repression is proceeded with concurrently.
2. Proposed mission should be accompanied by Allied delegates.
3. There should be no negotiation with most compromised leaders of rebel movement.

Grand Vizier called on me on 27th September and reaffirmed this attitude. On this I consulted further with General Wilson and my French colleague. Former is strongly of opinion that any forcible repression would take months to organise, and would not then be really efficient. French colleague, while agreeing personally with Grand Vizier's view as to inutility of purely pacific mission, continues to urge that any conciliatory action is doomed to failure if undertaken while Ferid remains in power. He also lays stress on hostility of financial circles to Ferid, which renders financial straits of Turkish Government even more desperate than they would be under some other Grand Vizier.

Having regard to Ferid's uncompromising attitude and situation generally, I have been forced reluctantly to acquiesce in view that he had better go. High Commissioners are now agreed in principle (1) to make a written communication pressing on Turkish Government proposal to send mission; (2) to accompany presentation with verbal intimation that they consider prospects of success of mission would be destroyed by continuance in power of present Government; and (3) to follow this action immediately by communication of their views to Sultan through Tewfik Pasha, whom they consider most suitable candidate for Grand Vizierate.

Action is only delayed owing to hesitation on the part of acting Italian

¹ Not printed; cf. Nos. 144, para. 3, and 145.

High Commissioner to proceed without definite authority from his Government.

I am adopting this programme without enthusiasm. I see no rational alternative, but it is a leap in the dark so far as Anatolia is concerned and as regards Constantinople; substitution of one bankrupt Government for another is unlikely to produce much improvement until Financial Commission is a going concern.

No. 149

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 3260 [E 11658/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 1, 1920*

My Lord,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 2965 of the 20th September transmitting copy of a note, with enclosures, received from the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs on the subject of the proposed despatch of a mission from Constantinople to the Nationalists.¹

In their draft reply to the Italian note of the 10th September (which is identical with a note addressed to His Majesty's Government by the Italian Embassy in London on the 17th September)² the French Government expressed themselves in favour of a mission of pacification to the Nationalists, but in order to promote the success of this mission they propose, not that it should be composed of, or at least accompanied by, representatives of Great Britain, France and Italy, but that it should be preceded by a change of Ministry at Constantinople.

You should inform the French Government that His Majesty's Government have carefully studied their note of the 20th September and its enclosures, and they fully concur in the view expressed in the draft reply to the Italian Government to the effect that delay in ratification of the treaty is a primary cause of dissension in Turkey, and keeps away from Constantinople those moderate elements which, while ready to recognise the *fait accompli*, are not prepared to incur any responsibility for it. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government the first essential is, for the above reasons, to bring pressure to bear on the present Government to ratify the treaty without further delay. Should the present Grand Vizier refuse to do so, it would then be time to consider the question of finding a successor who would be more amenable. It is considered that ratification would clear the ground for the pacification of Anatolia, and should therefore precede the despatch of a mission to the Nationalists.

¹ This despatch and its enclosures are not printed. The enclosures were (1) a note, dated Sept. 20, communicated by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs to Lord Derby; (2) a note, dated Sept. 10, from the Italian Embassy in Paris to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs; (3) the draft French reply to (2).

² Not printed. Cf. No. 142, penultimate paragraph.

You should add that His Majesty's Government will reply in a similar sense to the note received from the Italian Government,³ and are communicating their views to the British High Commissioner at Constantinople for his guidance.⁴ At the same time they are prepared to give full consideration to any alternative policy he may advocate in agreement with his French and Italian colleagues.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

³ A reply (not printed) in this sense to the Marquis Imperiali's note of Sept. 17 was sent by Lord Curzon on Oct. 1.

⁴ In Foreign Office despatch No. 780 of Oct. 1, not printed; cf. No. 145.

No. 150

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 4, 9 p.m.)*

*Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 12215/3/44]**

Most secret and personal

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 4, 1920, 11.10 a.m.

With reference to my telegram No. 1065 of 1st October.¹

As an outcome of conferences with the Sultan, Grand Vizier stated to a member of my staff, with whom he had a very confidential conversation on 1st October, that, sooner than consent to work with a Government of Nationalist leanings, the Sultan might probably abdicate, as he was reaching the limits of his endurance.

It is Ferid's opinion that, if he resigned, the next Government would most certainly oppose acquiescence in the treaty, as the feeling prevails most strongly, even amongst moderate Nationalists in Anatolia.

Whether Ferid Pasha is consciously exaggerating the Sultan's dependence on him it is extremely difficult to say. In some quarters he is accused of representing himself to the Sultan as being the only Grand Vizier who inspires confidence in the British, and of representing to us that he is the only man whom the Sultan trusts.

There may be some foundation in fact for this accusation, but, on the other hand, the detachment of his attitude, in most recent interviews, towards several questions suggests that it is not for personal reasons that he is clinging to power; also, he seems to have a genuine concern and devotion for the Sultan.

Although I feel bound to report this matter, I am sending message to the following effect, because the prospects would be grave if the Sultan abdicated, and also because Ferid has definitely asked whether, in the event of his resignation and of the Sultan's abdication, the British would help them, in order that they might make a dignified exit from the country:—

1. If Ferid considered it advisable to leave the country after his resignation, I would help him in every way.

¹ No. 147.

2. I will do all I can to protect the Sultan and Ferid if they are placed in position of imminent personal danger.

3. I strongly impress on the Sultan that by his abdication at the present time the opportunities of future utility to his country would be sacrificed and the situation would be complicated.

4. The question whether, in the event of the Sultan finding no alternative but abdication, I would help him to leave Turkey is one to which, except under your Lordship's instructions, I could not reply. Regarding this point I would like your Lordship's views. If the contingency arose, which I do not consider probable, I should have to take immediate action.²

² Lord Curzon minuted: 'I do not quite like the way in which things are going at Constantinople, the French assuming the upper hand. The sooner we get an Ambassador there the better C. 5/10.'

No. 151

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 5, 3.30 p.m.)

No. 1075 Telegraphic [E 12282/10576/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 4, 1920, 3.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 895¹ is founded on a misapprehension which I fear originated in my telegram No. 1006.²

I was misinformed as to appointment of French and Italian representatives on future Financial Commission. Position as since ascertained is that French representative has no definite (? understanding) (? so far as) is known here whilst Italian delegate on Public Debt to whom appointment was offered, has proceeded to Rome in order to consider question of acceptance.

Meanwhile general situation here has become such as to render it more undesirable than ever to precipitate financial break-down. My Colleagues and I agreed on September 29th that only possible course was to entrust Public Debt with provisional control of finances generally and more particularly to put on regular footing sales of stocks with view to prevent sale of war material—properly so-called,—and to ensure that sale of other stocks should be effected in proper conditions.

This action as regards Public Debt appeared to me and to Sir A. Block,³ whom I consulted, to be implicitly covered by your instructions that he should concert with his Colleagues⁴ who said that these instructions were

¹ Of Sept. 27, not printed. In this Lord Curzon said that he saw 'some inconvenience in control of expenditure being exercised by the Public Debt Administration', and considered 'that the only satisfactory method for meeting the financial situation lies in the immediate constitution and operation of the Financial Commission provided for by Article 231 and following Articles of Part 8 of the Turkish Treaty'. ² Of Sept. 10, not printed.

³ President of the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt.

⁴ These instructions were conveyed in Foreign Office telegram No. 840 of Sept. 11 (not printed), which said that Sir A. Block's appointment as British Delegate on the Financial Commission would be officially notified 'almost immediately'.

issued by you . . .⁵ to have been already appointed to (? Financial Commission). I was already committed when I received your telegram under reference and I did not feel justified in receding having regard to gravity of immediate situation.

My Colleagues and I therefore addressed to Grand Vizier on October 1st collective Note reserve (*sic*)⁶ and full translation of material portion of which is contained in my immediately following telegram.⁷ As Turkish Government had on September 29th themselves formally invited Public Debt to undertake control there was no difficulty with Porte.

I have however impressed both on Grand Vizier and on my Colleagues that I have gone rather beyond my instructions and that I regard present measure as a mere palliative. At meeting between High Commissioners and Public Debt delegates on October 2nd this point was brought out very strongly by Sir A. Block, who demonstrated clearly that Turkish Government is now practically bankrupt and that immediate constitution of Financial Commission could alone produce any real improvement in situation as that Commission alone could take necessary measures to organize new sources of revenue and to produce any substantial reduction of expenditure.

High Commissioners and Public Debt delegates unanimously accepted this view. Obvious argument in favour of it reinforced by (? attitude of) acting Italian High Commissioner who said that in agreeing to⁸ provisional establishment of Public Debt control in French sense of the word i.e. (*sic*) delegates would have access to all records for purposes of verification and criticism but would not have executive power.

It was agreed that French and Italian High Commissioners should urge their Governments to appoint members of Financial Commission without delay. This is suggestion: His Majesty's Government should, (a) strongly press for these appointments at Paris and Rome; and (b) concert with French and Italian Governments identic instructions as to representations to Turkish Government with a view to institution and functioning of Financial Commission in anticipation of ratification of Peace Treaty.

Matter is one in which hitches will certainly occur unless suggested instructions are explicit and absolutely identical.

⁵ The text here is uncertain. A printed copy of the telegram here read: 'should concert with his colleagues (? and which said that these instructions issued by you, had already been issued to Financial Commission)'.

⁶ On the copy of this telegram cited in n. 5 it was suggested that 'reserve' should read 'résumé'.

⁷ No. 1076 of Oct. 4, not printed.

⁸ On the copy of this telegram cited in n. 5 the following wording was suggested: 'that he agreed to'.

Telegram from M. Venizelos to Mr. Lloyd George¹

Unnumbered [E 12594/106/44]

Secret

ATHENS, October 5, 1920

Obliged to take decisions very soon about the demobilisation of the army whose indefinite maintenance on war footing becomes henceforward impossible from a political and financial point of view and useless if an immediate utilisation were not foreseen, I beg leave of Your Excellency to expose my point of view on the situation in Anatolia which does not cease to preoccupy me.

I am convinced that the Turkish Government will be unable to reduce Mustapha Kemal and that it would be extremely dangerous to grant the permission requested by them to form new divisions, for these would fatally reinforce the nationalists. The prolongation of the actual state of affairs in Anatolia would be full of menaces for the future. The Allies' inaction would embolden Kemal, complete the destruction of the Christian populations and leave a free hand to the intrigues of certain Powers desirous of using Kemal and Bolshevism in order to hinder the pacification of the East.

The only radical remedy would be a new campaign with the object of destroying definitely the nationalist forces around Angora and the Pontus, with the following double consequences—

1. Of driving the Turks out of Constantinople which would form, together with the zone of the Straits, a separate state the existence of which would constitute a unique efficacious guarantee of the liberty of the Straits.

2. Constitution of a separate state at the Pontus with the Greeks that have remained there and those who having emigrated to escape from the Turkish persecutions during the last 50 years are dispersed in the South of Russia and whose total number amounts to 800,000. This state collaborating with Armenia and Georgia would form a solid barrier against Islamism and eventually against Russian imperialism. The forces which Greece now disposes of would be sufficient to ensure the complete success of this expedition but for political and financial reasons the Hellenic Government would be unable to assume the exclusive initiative and responsibility thereof as in June last. They would nevertheless be ready to collaborate with all their forces with England if she were willing to take such an initiative in order to arrive at the aforesaid objects and if she were willing to give Greece the necessary financial assistance to that effect.

Were the British Government to partake these views it would be of the utmost importance that a decision should be arrived at without delay for in a few weeks the winter season commences in Anatolia which renders a campaign almost impossible. If a very prompt decision were not taken the

¹ A copy of this telegram was forwarded by Sir M. Hankey, Secretary to the Cabinet, to Sir E. Crowe on Oct. 12. In his covering letter Sir M. Hankey said that the Prime Minister regarded the telegram 'as rather specially secret because if anything were to come of it, it would be important not to let Mustapha Kemal have time to prepare for the attack'.

Greek Government would have to put to execution their plan of demobilisation that important political reasons oblige them to consider. Once the demobilisation accomplished the Government foresee that the country would be unwilling for a new mobilisation within a few months.

I should be extremely obliged to Your Excellency if you could kindly let me know your views on this subject and beg you to accept the assurance of my high consideration of my most cordial devotion.

No. 153

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 928 Telegraphic [E 12215/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 6, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your Personal and Secret telegram of 4th October¹ and your telegram No. 1065 of 1st October.²

The assurance which, in the second of your above-mentioned telegrams, you suggest giving to the Grand Vizier and the terms of your message in the first are approved.

In regard to point 4, raised in first of your above-mentioned telegrams, in case of extreme necessity I do not think we could refuse, but you should most strongly impress on the Sultan that he should not abdicate.

¹ No. 150.

² No. 147.

No. 154

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris) and Mr. Kennard¹ (Rome)

No. 1077² Telegraphic [E 12282/10576/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 8, 1920, 6 p.m.*

His Majesty's High Commissioner at Constantinople has reported present precarious financial state of the Turkish Government,³ and, at the pressing request of the Grand Vizier, has appealed to His Majesty's Government for financial assistance by means of the sale of Government stocks of material other than war material and of the release of certain sums placed under sequester by the Allied High Commissioners.

It is understood that the Turkish Government have consented to control of Government expenditure being exercised provisionally by the British, French and Italian delegates on the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt through the machinery provided by the Public Debt administration.

The matter has been carefully examined, and we consider that temporary control by the Public Debt is inconvenient, and that the only satisfactory method of coping with the situation is the immediate constitution and

¹ Counsellor in H.M. Embassy, Rome.

² No. 1077 to Paris, No. 466 to Rome.

³ e.g. in Nos. 130, 135, 142 and 151.

operation of the Financial Commission. With this object in view, Sir Adam Block, British delegate on the Council of the Ottoman Public Debt, has been appointed British representative on the Financial Commission.⁴

You should communicate the above to the French/Italian Government and urge the immediate appointment of the French/Italian representative, in order that the Commission may be established as early as possible.

In view of the urgency of the matter and the necessity of the Allied Governments making joint representations to the Turkish Government for the institution and functioning of the Commission in anticipation of ratification of the Treaty, you should obtain the views of the French/Italian Government as to the nature of the instructions which should be given to the Allied High Commissioners for this purpose.

⁴ Admiral de Robeck was instructed in Lord Curzon's telegram No. 895 of Sept. 27 (not printed) to notify the Porte of Sir A. Block's appointment 'and sound the Porte as to the immediate setting up of the Commission'.

No. 155

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 17)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 12824/3/44]

Personal and secret

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 15, 1920¹

Your telegram of October 6.²

When I saw the Sultan on October 11, he spoke plainly, in the private part of the conversation, of abdication in the event of the advent to power of a Nationalist Government, and was very insistent that a change of Cabinet in the present crisis would involve this sooner or later.

I said what I (? could) to dissuade him, but he was full of the idea of abdication, and was principally concerned with his position afterwards, if it were forced on him.

I am reporting fully by letter.³

¹ This telegram was drafted on Oct. 14; no hour of despatch or receipt is recorded.

² No. 153.

³ The reference appears to be to Constantinople despatch No. 1408 of Oct. 14 (not printed), received Oct. 22, which contained a full report of Admiral de Robeck's interview with the Sultan.

No. 156

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 18, 2.30 p.m.)

No. 1108 Telegraphic [E 12831/37/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 15, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 937.¹

However anxious we may be to secure release of our prisoners in nationalist hands, afraid that it is not at present practicable owing to difficulty of

¹ Of Oct. 8, not printed.

negotiating. I understand that military authorities have been for some time endeavouring to do so but that Mustapha Kemal has hitherto refused to treat with them.

If Commission now under discussion² should materialize and include Allied elements, our representatives might be authorised to take up question with nationalist leaders.

No difficulty need arise on the side of the Turkish Government, though if certain political deportees should be (? selected) and³ (? I consider) it might, as you point out, be desirable to stipulate that they should not be allowed at present to return to Turkey.

² In the Foreign Office it was suggested that these words referred to 'the Mission to the Nationalists'. Cf. Nos. 148 and 149.

³ In the Foreign Office this word was ringed as superfluous.

No. 157

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 987 Telegraphic [E 12824/3/44]

Personal

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 20, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your (Personal) telegram of October 14th.¹

Your action approved. You should lose no opportunity of dissuading the Sultan from a step so injurious to his country.

¹ No. 155.

No. 158

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 22, 2.30 p.m.)

No. 1121 Telegraphic [E 13076/10576/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 20, 1920, 8 p.m.

My telegram No. 1120.¹

Tewfik Pasha urged importance of assisting Turkey to meet immediate liabilities not by direct Allied assistance which he (? agreed) was out of the question but by facilitating financial establishments.

I said that my view was that financial Commission alone could render effective assistance and that policy should be to expedite functioning of that Commission which would follow on ratification of treaty.

Tewfik said that this was all very well but that Commission could not relieve situation for some time whereas Government would need ready money. He said that French High Commissioner speaking unofficially and

¹ Of Oct. 19, not printed. This had reported the official announcement of the resignation on Oct. 16 of Ferid Pasha and the offer by the Sultan of the Grand Vizierate on the 17th to Tewfik Pasha who had called on the French High Commissioner and Admiral de Robeck and expressed his hope of completing his Cabinet by Oct. 21.

for French only had led him to hope for assistance in this direction without indicating its nature.

I said nothing in my instructions would justify me in holding out any hope of direct help. He asked me to submit his views to you and to obtain very early answer. I promised to report what he said but explained that answers regarding financial question came very slowly from London and I pressed point of view which I had expressed regarding Financial Commission.²

Sir A. Block tells me that in his view only thing to do is to expedite constitution of Financial Commission and to arrange for application of financial clauses in anticipation of coming into force of Treaty as a whole. Once this is done relief *can* be afforded at once for Financial Commission can create credit which Turkish Government does not possess owing to restrictions imposed by Treaty. As for short interval requiring to be bridged essential payments for September have been assured and similar payments for October which will fall due at beginning of November can also be assured under auspices of public debt control by incoming revenue, such as it is, plus disposal of stocks other than war material in strict sense.

Course now indicated would appear to be to press strongly for ratification and to arrange for completion of Financial Commission by appointment of French member and for application of financial clauses of Treaty in anticipation of Allied ratifications.

My colleagues and I propose to apply first part of this programme as soon as new Government is approved. Only thing likely to (? delay) action is desire of Acting Italian High Commissioner based on instructions from Rome to obtain simultaneously some sort of recognition by Turks of Tripartite agreement.³ If this difficulty assumes serious proportions I will telegraph further.

Meanwhile I venture again to urge very strongly that French Government be pressed to appoint their member of Financial Commission.⁴

Constitution of military and other Commissions should also follow Turkish ratification as soon as possible but Financial Commission is of such primary importance that if new Government and Sultan should prove recalcitrant about ratification I should revert to my previous idea of instituting Commission (? and) bring (financial) clauses into operation without awaiting any ratification at all.

² In his telegram No. 1007 of Oct. 25 (not printed) Lord Curzon approved Admiral de Robeck's language to the Grand Vizier.

³ See No. 118, n. 2.

⁴ In his telegram No. 1137 of Oct. 25 (not printed) Lord Curzon instructed Lord Derby to 'endeavour to hasten appointment of French delegate'.

No. 159

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received October 25, 9.55 a.m.)

No. 1139 Telegraphic [E 13178/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, October 22,¹ 1920, 2.10 a.m.

My immediately preceding telegram² gives the list of new Cabinet which took office to-day October 21st.³

Cabinet is evidently intended to be one of 'safe' even of moderate Nationalists [*sic*] leanings, Ministry of conciliation in fact.

Most significant selection is that of ex-Grand Vizier Izzet Pasha for Minister of the Interior. He is generally credited with strong Nationalist sympathies but he has kept very quiet for a long time past.

Imperial decree appointing new Grand Vizier is very short and entirely colourless.

¹ This telegram was drafted on Oct. 21. ² Not printed. ³ See No. 158, n. 1.

No. 160

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 999 Telegraphic [E 12741/3/44]**

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 23, 1920, 5 p.m.

Your telegrams No. 1100 of 13th October¹ and Nos. 1103, 1104 and 1105 of 14th October.¹

Instructions sent to your French colleague had already been communicated to His Majesty's Government,² who generally concur in them, except that they cannot commit themselves to financial help. Resignation of Damad Ferid, reported in your telegram No. 1116 of 17th October,¹ appears to dispose of objections submitted in your telegram No. 1104 of 14th October.³

With regard to alternative policy proposed in your telegram No. 1105 of 14th October,⁴ His Majesty's Government still consider ratification by

¹ Not printed.

² By the French Embassy on Oct. 12.

³ Admiral de Robeck had objected to the French proposals whereby Allied joint action was to secure, first, the immediate ratification of the peace treaty by the Sultan, and then, the resignation of Ferid Pasha's cabinet and the formation of 'a new ministry . . . selected by High Commissioners and adapted to bring Nationalists into line'.

⁴ Admiral de Robeck had proposed:

'1. Proceed with mission on lines agreed between High Commissioners.

'2. Continue to urge on Turkish Government immediate ratification, but refrain from exerting strong pressure, at least until Allied ratifications are definitely in sight.

'3. Leave local political situation to develop on its own lines, i.e., make no attempt to keep Ferid in power or to drive him from power.

'4. Dissuade Sultan, as and when opportunities offer, from regarding his personal position as bound up in that of any particular Ministry.

'5. Prepare quite definitely for the contingency of the failure of mission, i.e., decide at

Turkey to be the next essential step both in order to confront the Nationalists with a *fait accompli* and so avoid bargaining regarding the treaty and also to facilitate institution and working of the commissions, in which lies the only hope of pacifying the country should the mission fail. Neither we nor French, we imagine, would press for immediate ratification if it really entailed abdication of Sultan. His Majesty's Government would have preferred not to send a representative with the mission in order not to be associated in a possible rebuff, but if you are committed on this point they will leave it to the decision of yourself and your colleagues. It is hoped to ratify here early in present session, and you can use this as an argument with the Porte.

(Repeated to Paris, No. 1128, and Rome, No. 478.)

once on course of action in that event, recognising that if Nationalists have to be quelled by force, and if force to be used is Turkish, Allies must help Turkish Government financially and with officers to organise army and gendarmerie, and that such organisation must necessarily be affair of five or six months.

'6. Proceed with constitution of financial and military commissions, especially former without further delay and without awaiting ratification of treaty even by Turkey.'

No. 161

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 1129 Telegraphic [E 12741/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 23, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your despatch No. 3143 of 13th October,¹ and my telegram No. 999 to Constantinople of 23rd October.²

Please inform French Government that His Majesty's Government are in general agreement with instructions sent to French High Commissioner at Constantinople (except as regards advance of money), and give them substance of instructions to British High Commissioner. Damad Ferid having already resigned, next step is to secure ratification of the treaty by new Ministry and Sultan.

His Majesty's Government hope to ratify early in present session, and you should urge importance of early ratification by the French.

¹ Not printed.

² No. 160.

No. 162

Earl Curzon to Mr. Kennard (Rome)

*No. 479 Telegraphic [E 12741/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 23, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Please ascertain prospects of Italian ratification of Turkish Treaty and urge early action in this sense. His Majesty's Government hope to ratify early in present session.

No. 163

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 1143 Telegraphic [E 13152/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 26, 1920, 10 p.m.*

Constantinople telegram No. 1147 of 24th October: Mission to Anatolia.¹

Please communicate to French Government arguments contained in telegram under reference, and urge them to instruct French High Commissioner to agree to Allied delegates accompanying the mission. If necessary, they could go unofficially without being members of the mission.

Confidential

I understand quite privately from French Chargé d'Affaires that his Government are not likely to insist on their point of view.

(Repeated to Constantinople, No. 1013.)

¹ Not printed. In this telegram Admiral de Robeck said that the presence of Allied delegates with the proposed mission to the Nationalists 'would show that Allies and Central Government were working on same lines, and they would be in a position to exercise considerable influence on Nationalist opinion'. He added that he did not see 'force of French objection that failure of mission accompanied by Allied delegates would render subsequent action more difficult. Objection would be very cogent if intentions of Allies were to try purely Ottoman Mission first, and if that failed, make proposals of their own more acceptable to Nationalists. As, however, object of any eventual pacific action of Allies would be same as that of present mission, i.e. to secure acceptance of treaty as it stands, it appears to be desirable (a) to start off Turkish Mission in conditions most conducive to success, and (b) to be prepared with plan of subsequent action in the not improbable event of failure even in these conditions.'

No. 164

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

*No. 1014 Telegraphic [E 13152/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 26, 1920, 10 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1147 of 24th October:¹ Mission to Anatolia.

In the event of British delegate accompanying mission, he should take up with Nationalists question of release of Colonel Rawlinson and other officers and men,² also the release of Messrs. Medlicott and party if they still appear to be in Nationalists' hands.³

¹ See No. 163, n. 1.

² Cf. No. 122.

³ Messrs. W. B. and J. Medlicott, workers in a Timber Cutting Concession 40 miles north of Adana, had been taken prisoners by Mustapha Kemal's followers early in April 1920. Mr. W. B. Medlicott had died of fever on Sept. 18.

No. 165

Earl Curzon to Mr. Kennard (Rome)

No. 967 [E 13021/2158/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 26, 1920*

Sir,

With reference to Sir G. Buchanan's Despatch No. 400 of the 26th May 1920,¹ I observe that Francesco Coppola, writing in the 'Idea Nazionale' of the 8th instant under the heading 'Turkish History "made in England"', refers again, in spite of the denial issued by Sir G. Buchanan in May last,² to the existence of a secret agreement between this country and Turkey.

2. In view of the anti-British propaganda which is now being carried on in the Italian Press,³ and particularly in such papers as the 'Idea Nazionale', it seems desirable to take any measures which are possible to expose the insincerity of the whole campaign. I should, therefore, be glad if you would take an opportunity of bringing the question once more to the attention of the Italian Foreign Office with particular reference to Francesco Coppola's article in the 'Idea Nazionale'.

I am, &c.,
(for the Secretary of State)
J. A. C. TILLEY

¹ Not printed.

² This denial was reported in Rome despatch No. 361 of May 16, not printed.

³ For subsequent references to the anti-British attitude of the Italian press see No. 170 below and Vol. XII, No. 294.

No. 166

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 1, 10.30 a.m.)

*No. 1157 Telegraphic [E 13499/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *October 28, 1920, 9.15 p.m.*

My telegram No. 1147 of 24th October.¹

Collective note demanding immediate ratification of treaty by Turkey was handed to Grand Vizier on afternoon of 25th September [? October].

Later on same day Government published statement of policy, most significant passage of which was as follows:—

'Cabinet, being convinced of absolute necessity that Government and nation should work hand in hand, will summon Parliament as soon as effort to secure union has produced result, in order to render possible ratification, in legal form, of Peace Treaty in accordance with requirements of Constitution.'

Statement was doubtless drafted before receipt of collective note of High Commissioners, but Tewfik was already aware of our views regarding

¹ See No. 163, n. 1.

ratification. I therefore hope that passage quoted above was mainly for public consumption, and that intention was to devise some formula which would combine immediate ratification with reservation of right of Parliament, if and when assembled, to have treaty formally submitted to it.

Attitude of Ministers does not, unfortunately, confirm this view. Tewfik himself manifested hesitation and embarrassment when note was presented, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, who paid me his first official visit on 27th October, expressed very definite view that order of proceedings should be to effect composition with Nationalists, then to convene Chamber representing non-occupied areas, then to ratify. Minister for Foreign Affairs urged that this was the only course at all compatible with Constitution, and that it was also the only practical course, as immediate ratification by Sultan and Government would be so resented by Nationalists as to destroy all chance of bringing them into line by peaceful means.

I said that your telegrams showed increasing anxiety on the part of His Majesty's Government for immediate ratification by Turkey;² that this was preliminary condition of assistance which they were willing and eager to render, e.g., by instituting Financial Commission and bringing that and clauses into operation as soon as possible; and that delay would entail financial chaos, besides being fraught with dangerous possibilities for Turkey.

I exhausted every argument in favour of immediate ratification, but I made little or no impression. Minister for Foreign Affairs promised to speak to Tewfik, whose views, however, he stated to be identical with his own. I promised to report what Minister said, but intimated that I could hold out no hope of favourable reception by His Majesty's Government of programme which he outlined.

Three other important Ministers have taken similar line in private conversations with members of my staff.

Constitutional difficulty is very real one and can only be got over by some formula on lines indicated above, but I fear it looks as if High Commissioners may have greatest difficulty in obtaining from new Government ratification in any shape at all until they have first tried to bring Nationalists round.

Attitude of Government is hardly consistent with what Tewfik led us to expect in conversations preceding his advent to power, but this merely illustrates fact that in any tight place he is more likely to be influenced by others than to exercise any real control. Ministers are also encouraged in their view by knowledge that Sultan, however much he may differ from them, otherwise also shrinks from immediate ratification.

² e.g. No. 160.

No. 167

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris) and Mr. Kennard (Rome)

No. 1175¹ Telegraphic [E 13310/9075/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 30, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your despatch No. 3104 (October 10th²/No. 785 (October 6th)³: Allied Commissions in Turkey).

With regard to Military Commission to be established under Turkish Treaty, we are in agreement with War Office upon following points:—

(1) That command of Allied Forces (with which is combined the Presidency of Military Commission) should be for two years from date of ratification. However, in order to make all preparations for Commission to begin work immediately the Treaty is operative, General Harington⁴ should take up his command at once in anticipation of ratification.

(2) That French and Italians should control and organise Turkish gendarmerie and 'special elements' in the economic spheres allotted to them respectively by Tripartite Agreement. That we should perform same functions in North-West Anatolia.

(3) That paragraph 3 of Article 178 of Treaty should be ignored when necessary by Military Commission since for practical purposes of control and administration it will not always be possible to exclude Turkish Forces from demilitarised zone.

(4) That Great Britain, France and Italy should provide organisation and Officers for Police in their respective spheres specified under heading No. (2), and that Civil Police at Constantinople should remain under British command as long as the Allied Commander-in-Chief is a British Officer.

Please submit these proposals to the Government to which you are accredited and ask if they agree.

Meanwhile French/Italian Military Attaché is discussing minor points of details with War Office.

¹ No. 1175 to Paris; No. 484 to Rome.

² Not printed. In this despatch in which he reported having carried out the instructions in No. 146 Lord Derby said that he presumed that Lord Curzon's intention 'was to propose investing a special Council of Ambassadors at Constantinople with powers . . . precisely similar to those now exercised by the Conference of Ambassadors in Paris'. Lord Curzon in his despatch No. 3392 of Oct. 15 (not printed) replied that this was not so, 'but rather that reference should only be made to them [the Council of Ambassadors at Constantinople] in the event of any difficulty arising' within or between the individual Commissions to be set up under the Turkish Treaty.

³ Not printed.

⁴ Lt. Gen. Sir Charles Harington had been appointed on Sept. 26, 1920, to succeed Sir G. Milne as G.O.C.-in-Chief, Army of the Black Sea. He arrived in Constantinople on Nov. 8.

No. 168

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris) and Mr. Kennard (Rome)

*No. 1190¹ Telegraphic [E 13499/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 3, 1920, 4 p.m.*

Constantinople telegram No. 1157 of 28th October.² Ratification of the treaty.

In opinion of His Majesty's Government the only course open to Allies is to make further representations to Turkish Government insisting on immediate ratification and asking Porte to realise what are the logical consequences of refusal to make peace. Some compromise must be devised on the constitutional question. In order not to provide an excuse for endless delay, the proposed mission to the Nationalists should be postponed until Porte agrees to ratification.

Please represent above to Government to which you are accredited, and ask them to instruct their representatives in Constantinople to join their British colleague in taking this line.³

¹ No. 1190 to Paris; No. 488 to Rome.

² No. 166.

³ In his telegram No. 487 of Nov. 9 (not printed) Sir G. Buchanan reported that the Italian Government concurred and had instructed their representative at Constantinople accordingly. The reply of Nov. 15 from the French Government (not printed), demurring to the course proposed by H.M.G., was transmitted under cover of Lord Derby's despatch No. 3433 of Nov. 16, received on Nov. 17, by which time Lord Curzon had approved (see No. 175 below) the terms of the further note to the Turkish Government outlined in No. 173 below. Therefore no action was taken on the French note of Nov. 15.

No. 169

Mr. Lindsay¹ (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received November 5, 6.40 p.m.)

*No. 1289 Telegraphic [E 13728/3/44]**

Urgent

PARIS, *November 5, 1920, 4.20 p.m.*

Reference your telegram No. 1143 of 26th October:² Turkish mission to Anatolia.

French reply just received, as follows:—

'President of the Council still thinks there are very serious drawbacks in thus compromising the Allies and placing them in position of suppliants *vis-à-vis* of Nationalists. Far from facilitating result, such a decision entails risk of delay in it. Only in case of immediate ratification of treaty being obtained from Sultan and new Turkish Government would French High Commissioner be able to agree to participation of Allied delegates in mission to Anatolia, and solely in order to avert a collapse of negotiations with Nationalists.'³

Copy of note by bag to-night.⁴

¹ Minister in H.M. Embassy at Paris.

² No. 163.

³ Lord Curzon minuted: 'I have always thought the mission premature. C 7/11.'

⁴ Under cover of Lord Derby's despatch No. 3328 of Nov. 5, not printed.

Sir G. Buchanan (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received November 7, 3.5 p.m.)

No. 481 Telegraphic [E 13781/3/44]

ROME, November 6, 1920, 10 p.m.

In course of conversation yesterday Minister for Foreign Affairs speaking of Signor Di Martino's appointment¹ said that latter was in such close touch with leading journalists in this country that he would be able to exercise a salutary influence on Italian Press. I remarked that he would be doing useful work if he could induce that Press to abstain from misrepresenting our actions and if he would (? endeavour to) expedite settlement of all pending questions. He would find that Your Lordship was inspired with warm feelings of friendship for Italy and that you desired to maintain closest possible collaboration with Italian Government. I regretted however to say that according to reports which we have received from Turkey, Asia Minor and Caucasus,² Italian agents in those countries did not give us the loyal support which we had the right to expect and that their sympathies seemed to be rather with our enemies and more especially with Turkish Nationalists. Your Lordship had indeed in course of a private conversation with myself expressed your surprise at an attitude which you were at a loss to explain.

Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that above reports were (? mainly) either unfounded or greatly exaggerated and were probably derived from Greek sources. Could I, he asked, quote any concrete case to prove that Italians were on good terms with Nationalists? On my telling him that we had reason to believe that they had a military mission at Angora with Kemal Pasha³ he gave me his word of honour that this was not true. He would however he said make enquiries and let me know results. He has since in a private letter confirmed all that he had said and has given me most formal assurances that there are no civilian or military missions or agents with Kemal Pasha.⁴

¹ Signor de Martino, Italian Ambassador at Berlin, had recently been appointed Italian Ambassador at London: he presented his letters of credence there on Feb. 8, 1921.

² For earlier comments on Italian activities in the Caucasus see Vol. XII, Nos. 522 and n. 6, 540, 571-2.

³ This information had been communicated to Sir G. Buchanan during his recent leave in England; it was confirmed in Lord Curzon's despatch No. 995 of Nov. 3, not printed.

⁴ In his subsequent despatch No. 894 of Nov. 13 (not printed) Sir G. Buchanan reported that, having in the meantime received Lord Curzon's despatch No. 995 of Nov. 3, he had on the morning of the 13th reverted to the subject in conversation with Signor Contarini, Secretary-General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who had said he would cause 'searching enquiries to be made'. On Nov. 26 in his despatch No. 929 (not printed) he wrote that Signor Contarini had now informed him in a private letter 'that, in reply to an enquiry which he had addressed to the Italian Embassy at Constantinople, Signor Arlotta [Acting Italian High Commissioner] had qualified these reports as false and scandalous. The latter had caused the most careful enquiries to be made . . . and had, like Count Sforza, attributed these unfounded reports to the misplaced confidence of our military authorities in the information supplied them by their Greek Agents' (cf. No. 98, n. 7).

No. 171

Colonel Stokes¹ (Tiflis) to Earl Curzon (Received November 15²)

No. 480 Telegraphic [Confidential/General/363/19]

Personal

TIFLIS, November 6, 1920²

Successful invasion of Armenia by Turks³ has modified situation in Middle East. Turks are bent on getting control of Azerbaijan, Bolsheviks are determined to retain Azerbaijan in Russia. Discord between Turks and Bolsheviks is thus inevitable. (We are) hostile to both but will not fight either.

Moment is opportune to secure friendship of one of the two against the other. Friendship with Bolsheviks may stop their actual advance eastward and southward but their propaganda will continue. It may also give us raw materials badly needed for our industries and markets for our manufactures. On the other hand it is difficult to believe in permanent Bolshevik regime. Friendship with Turks will cost us abandonment of our policy of supporting Greek expansion in Turkey. It will bring to our side whole of Islam and it is vital to continuance of our Eastern Empire that Islam should be on our side. There . . .⁴ any fear of Islam unit(ing) against us. Gulf between Sunni and Shiah is wide and can be widened if necessary. There is no Mohommetan [*sic*] nation with which our prestige does not even now stand higher than that of any other foreign country and there is none which does not desire our friendship. From Bokhara and Kabul . . .⁴ we can have Islam on our side.

I venture to submit above for Your Lordship's consideration. If desired contact could be established from Tiflis with Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

¹ British Commissioner in Transcaucasia.

² The times of despatch and receipt are not recorded.

³ Cf. Vol. XII, Nos. 602, 607, 610, 613.

⁴ The text is here uncertain.

No. 172

*Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 9, 12.45 p.m.)*

*No. 1173 Telegraphic [E 13897/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 8, 1920, 11.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 1157 of 28th October.¹

I have lost no opportunity since 27th October of urging on Porte the importance of immediate ratification of treaty. My French colleague has been equally insistent, and Acting Italian High Commissioner appears to be supporting us loyally. We have driven Turkish Ministers from position that they must wait until Parliament can be convened to sanction ratification. Minister for Foreign Affairs, whose visit I returned on 2nd November, voiced the unanimous opinion of Cabinet that immediate ratification would

¹ No. 166.

hopelessly compromise new Ministry in eyes of Nationalists and that attempt at conciliation must precede ratification, though he stated emphatically that Government were prepared to assume responsibility of ratification, and that they did not intend to make it condition of acceptance of treaty by Nationalists.

Minister for Foreign Affairs held his ground, notwithstanding every argument I advanced regarding the certain financial crisis and other dangers inherent on delay.

One feature of all these recent conversations with Minister for Foreign Affairs, and others, emphasised the desire of Government to obtain from High Commissioner something with which to placate Nationalists. They have hinted at, but not suggested, three things, viz.:—

1. Promise of 'benevolent interpretation' of treaty.
2. Assurance that Greeks would after ratification withdraw from territory not assigned to them by treaty.
3. Protection against the possibility of Armenian frontier being decided in sense entirely adverse to Turkey.

As regards (1), I have taken the line that there can be no question of interpretation until treaty assumes definite shape.

As regards (2), I have said that we desire nothing better than eventual withdrawal of Greeks, but that there can be no question of it so long as Nationalists make open war on Allies and the legitimate Government are not in a position to give effect to treaty.

Point (3) has been raised only by Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and I have not made any statement.

In conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs on 2nd November I insisted on necessity for answer to High Commissioners' note of 25th October.² This has elicited the reply dated 4th November summarised in my immediately following telegram.³ High Commissioners have arranged to meet on 7th November with object of agreeing on recommendations to Governments regarding future line of action. I will telegraph further when meeting has taken place.⁴

Turkish Government have in the meantime been considering question of mission to Anatolia. It seems to have been decided in principle to send mission in which leading rôle will be played by Izzet Pasha. There is some talk of placing it under the presidency of one of the Imperial Princes. It is uncertain to what extent preliminary communications have been exchanged with Nationalist leaders. Government deny that even preliminary contact has yet been established, but all sorts of rumours are afloat, and, if there is any foundation for them, attitude of Nationalist leaders regarding acceptance of treaty is uncompromising.

Question of Allied participation in mission has lapsed, at any rate for the time being, as Government refuse to fulfil necessary condition of such participation, i.e., ratification of treaty before the commission starts.

² See No. 166.

³ Not printed; for extracts from the Turkish reply see No. 173 below.

⁴ See No. 173.

No. 173

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 11, 4.45 p.m.)

No. 1189 *Telegraphic* [E 14029/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 10, 1920, 11.45 p.m.

Following are extracts from reply addressed by Turkish Government to Allied High Commissioners' (? amended) note of October 25th demanding ratification of Treaty.¹

Begins.

Turkish Government fully realises that in any event Treaty must be ratified and they do not intend to attempt to (? nullify) obligations encumbent [*sic*] on them.

They consider in the interests of task of reconciliation it is desirable to postpone ratification until contact is made with Anatolia, not with a view to entering into discussion on the subject of Treaty but in order to make known situation and reasons which render ratification necessary. I venture to hope that Your Excellency will use your influence with your Government to induce them to consent to postpone ratification of Treaty for one month at least in order to give Government time to enter into relations with Anatolia beforehand.

I also venture to hope that you will not refuse aid in procuring for Imperial Government without delay financial and economic assistance which they need without making it (? contingent upon) ratification of Treaty.

Ends.

High Commissioners decided to acknowledge receipt of this note saying that they have been instructed to insist on immediate ratification of Treaty (? and could) only refer matter to their Governments and adding that as financial or economic assistance is solely dependent on future financial commission, and as this Commission can only be constituted and function after ratification of Treaty by Turkish Government any assistance of this nature is necessarily contingent upon ratification.

We also concur in submitting to our Governments following considerations relative to present situation and reply to be made to note of Turkish Government which we are merely acknowledging whilst awaiting instructions which we request.

Attempt at reconciliation by means of despatch of a mission to Anatolia would have had more chances of success if it could have been made at the period when it was suggested to Allied Governments, that is more than three months ago. At present, chances of success are far less for following reasons—Lapse of time since Greek advance in Asia Minor, . . .² and above all, successes of latter in Armenia³ and junction of their forces with Red Armies coming from East.

¹ See No. 166.

² The text is here uncertain.

³ The reference appears to be to the successes of the Turkish Nationalist forces in Armenia; cf. No. 171 and No. 174 below.

In spite of these considerations, attempted reconciliation should not only be pursued but encouraged and facilitated by Allies since it is only remaining method which can be contemplated at the moment in . . .⁴ of further use of Greek Army which would possess serious drawbacks. Allied Governments and High Commissioners consider ratification of Treaty by Turkish Government should be immediate and should precede despatch of Mission to Anatolia; Turkish Government holds on the contrary that despatch of Mission should precede ratification, and requests postponement of ratification of which they promise, it is true, performance.

To insist on ratification before despatch of Mission presents risk of making situation even worse than it is at present. Cabinet might resign and possibly no one would be willing to take office under such circumstances; Treaty would remain unratified; ground would not even have been cleared for attempt at reconciliation; cleavage between Constantinople and Anatolia would be more accentuated than ever, and only (? remaining) means to put an end to it, would be force.

In these circumstances, High Commissioners (? propose) not to connect the two questions of ratifications and of despatch of Mission. Reply made to Porte might make no mention of latter question and might insist on immediate ratification as being all the more indispensable since in addition to reasons described above Turkish Government is now under obligation of disowning action of Nationalists against (? Armenia) which constitutes a (? violation), in anticipation of Treaty and a new marked act of hostility against Allies. In these circumstances any delay to ratify would run risk of causing consequences grave and prejudicial to Turkey.

Time which must elapse before High Commissioners can receive their instructions and send their reply will already account for a . . .⁴ of postponement demanded by Turkish Government which will be able to take advantage of it to undertake reconciliatory steps in Anatolia which they are preparing. Thus High Commissioners on their side will be able to see whether Turkish Government is proceeding as expeditiously as circumstances permit with despatch of Mission and conduct of negotiations with Angora.

High Commissioners whilst recognising great difficulties of Turkish Government's task, feel that . . .⁴ this Government has not attempted to procrastinate and gain time (? in the) hope, vague and undefined it is true, that in view of (? event)s (? such as) political complications in Greece⁵ and especially complete annihilation of Armenia might improve situation of Turkey and (? permit) certain modifications in Treaty of Sèvres.

(? Above) is identic telegram from three High Commissioners to their Governments.

I request instructions as to reply to be made to Porte.

⁴ The text is here uncertain.

⁵ King Alexander of Greece had died on Oct. 25 and general elections were to be held in Greece on Nov. 14; see Vol. XII, Nos. 420 and 428.

Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 11, 12.55 p.m.)

No. 1190 Telegraphic [E 14008/3/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 10, 1920, 11.45 p.m.

My telegram No. 1189 of 10th November¹ represents views of myself and colleagues on 7th November, but telegraphic information since received appears to me to have considerably modified situation in a sense distinctly to our disadvantage.

General Wrangel's army has been driven back from Perekop line with heavy losses as result of Bolshevik attack in force, and is rapidly retiring.²

Kemalists have overrun Armenia, which may now be considered as lost to Allies, and there is considerable danger of Georgia, including Batoum, sharing similar fate (see General Harrington's [*sic*] telegram to Troopers, No. I.-9489, of 8th November).³

Bolshevik Russia and Anatolia have therefore now effected a junction, held⁴ country up to gates of Ismidt and to front held by Greeks is under control of forces hostile to Allies, and particularly to British. After Bolshevik-Kemalist successes, Nationalists will be still less disposed to accept any proposals made by Constantinople Government with a view to acceptance of Treaty of Sèvres, and it may be taken for certain that their confidence in eventual success of their movement is greater than ever.

I am therefore reluctantly driven to the conclusion that whatever prospect previously existed of reconciling [*sic*] Nationalist leaders to accept treaty by pacific means has now disappeared, and it becomes a matter for consideration whether events of past few days have not been precipitated by necessity for recourse to those means use of which High Commissioners have hitherto deprecated, viz., employment of force, it did not (*sic*) necessarily imply a further advance of Greek army.

Objections to this advance have lost none of their cogency, but it is useless to disguise fact that Allied Great Powers have so weakened their own effectiveness as perhaps to leave no alternative.

Successive reductions in Allied contingents in Constantinople had already caused me serious uneasiness, and without wishing in any way to question our military policy I feel bound to represent to your Lordship my appreciation of situation here arrived at after full discussion with General Harrington. In a few days' time our force will consist of only two British and four Indian battalions. French have an equal number of troops, and there is a Greek division at Ismidt under General Harrington's orders.

I cannot but submit for your Lordship's most serious consideration whether forces so reduced can be regarded as sufficient to cope even with such local

¹ No. 173.

² See Vol. XII, No. 806.

³ Not traced in Foreign Office archives. Cf. Vol. XII, Nos. 616-17.

⁴ In another text this word read: '? also'.

situations as may quite conceivably arise in view of fact that Turk, who only understands force and who fully appreciated our show of strength at time of occupation of Constantinople, now sees that with situation in Near East more uncertain than ever defence of our interests and enforcement of treaty are left to a few Allied battalions.

I do not, indeed, anticipate trouble in Constantinople itself under present conditions, but an anti-Ally reaction is possible should Kemalists, with Bolshevik assistance, develop an offensive movement against Greek division at Ismidt, or should main Greek army fall back on old line which their staff declare to be only alternative to a fresh advance up to Ada Bazar-Konia railway.

No. 175

Earl Curzon to Admiral Sir J. de Robeck (Constantinople)

No. 1103 Telegraphic [E 14029/3/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 17, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1190 of 10th November:¹ Allied policy in Turkey.

Reply proposed in your telegram No. 1189 of 10th November² is approved generally, but threat in last sentence might be made more definite by addition of statement that Nationalist attack on Armenia has produced strong anti-Turkish feeling which may result in serious demand for revision of Treaty in sense unfavourable to Turkey, and that this danger to Turkey will be increased by delay in ratifying Treaty as signed, since such delay in reality implies a continuance of state of war.

(Repeated to Paris, No. 1240, and Rome, No. 508.)

¹ No. 174.

² No. 173.

No. 176

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

*No. 1036 [E 14224/3/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 19, 1920*

Sir,

With reference to your telegram No. 481 of the 6th instant, relative to the attitude taken up by the Italian Government in regard to the enforcement of the terms of the Turkish Treaty and to the general policy of the Allied Governments in Turkey,¹ I have to inform you that on the 11th instant the Italian Ambassador called upon Sir Eyre Crowe and read out a telegram from Count Sforza recording his recent communications with yourself respecting the alleged presence of an Italian mission with Mustapha Kemal at Angora. He reiterated in the most emphatic manner that the whole story of this mission was untrue, and was obviously due to the imagination or deliberate invention of some interested Levantine agent. He added that it was of course quite conceivable that Mustapha Kemal himself should

¹ No. 170.

have made remarks calculated to produce a belief in his having the active sympathy and support of Italy.

2. Marquis Imperiali said he was glad that the opportunity had been taken of putting such a story to the test. He was strongly in favour of putting an end to the distrust which he was quite aware was felt in London against the alleged misdeeds of Italian agents in the East. He had suggested to Count Sforza that before relinquishing his post in London he should be authorised to enter into a general exchange of views with Lord Curzon on the subject of the Allied policy in the Mediterranean and in Turkey. He felt sure that in this way, and in this way alone, all misunderstandings and suspicions could be disposed of, and that harmonious co-operation between the Italian and British Governments be secured which it has been his ambition during the whole term of his Embassy to place upon a sure foundation. Having received Count Sforza's cordial approval, he accordingly proposed to ask Lord Curzon for an interview at an early date in order to arrive at a clear understanding.

3. The Ambassador proceeded to translate from the Italian a further long message from Count Sforza, indicating in somewhat greater detail the points on which Italy was anxious to clear the situation. The Ambassador promised to let Sir Eyre Crowe have a short summary of this telegram, although he explained he had no authority to furnish a copy, but had been directed to make a verbal communication only. A copy of this summary, since received from his Excellency, is annexed to this despatch.²

4. Sir Eyre Crowe asked the Ambassador whether he had in his mind any particular proposals that he would submit to Lord Curzon. So far as Sir Eyre Crowe gathered the aims of Italian policy from the statement his Excellency had just made, he did not see any difficulty in recording a common view and understanding. Sir Eyre Crowe found the Ambassador's mind quite vague as to what suggestions or measures he could put forward, but his Excellency promised to think it over, and speak to Sir Eyre Crowe again.

5. He then made an urgent personal appeal to Sir Eyre Crowe to help to crown his activities as Ambassador in London by getting His Majesty's Government to enter into an engagement as regards Cyprus, by which the alienation of the island at any future date would be made dependent on the previous approval of Italy.³ Marquis Imperiali said he had received no instructions to renew this proposal, or, in fact, to allude to the subject in any way, but he felt he would be rendering his country a great service by obtaining such an assurance, which moreover imposed no sacrifice whatever on Great Britain. Sir Eyre Crowe observed that his Excellency evidently undervalued the importance of asking His Majesty's Government to restrict their liberty in regard to a matter of purely national and imperial concern. To his argument that we had already given an identical pledge to France,⁴ Sir Eyre Crowe replied that he would not be surprised if His Majesty's

² Not printed.

³ Cf. Nos. 111 and 112.

⁴ In May 1916; see Vol. IV, p. 246.

Government held that this was all the more reason for not tying their hands still further. Sir Eyre Crowe said he could not conceal from the Ambassador that the chances of his Excellency's suggestion being favourably entertained were very small. The Ambassador said he was aware that Lord Curzon felt very strongly on the subject, but he seemed to think it possible that his Lordship might stretch a point in order to oblige so warm a friend of England as the Ambassador personally.⁵

I am, &c.,
(for the Secretary of State)
J. A. C. TILLEY

⁵ In a minute of Nov. 15 Lord Curzon had commented as follows: 'M. Imperiali puts every case on the ground of personal favour to himself. And what do we get in return? Absolutely nothing. Before I see him, let us get our case against the Italians from Ad. de Robeck—for they have been intriguing everywhere. But I am going to make no engagements about Cyprus except not to give it up to anybody in my time. C.'

No. 177

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople)¹ to Earl Curzon (Received November 29)

No. 1542 [E 14893/37/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, *November 20, 1920*

My Lord,

With reference to Your Lordship's despatch No. 647 of the 20th August, 1920, on the subject of Turkish deportees now at Malta, with which was enclosed a memorandum drawn up by the Law Officers of the Crown,² I have the honour to state that I have been in consultation with the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Army of the Black Sea, with regard to the points raised, and submit the following observations.

2. In the Law Officers' memorandum the Turks detained at Malta are divided into the following three classes:

- (a) Political Offenders;
- (b) Persons accused of deportations, pillage or massacres; and
- (c) Persons accused of ill-treatment of prisoners of war.

The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, however, points out that they might be more accurately classified under five headings, thus:—

- (a) Persons deported at the request and upon the authority of the Turkish Authorities (i.e., for safety of custody early in 1919);
- (b) Persons whose unrestricted liberty has at subsequent periods been regarded as a potential danger to the interests and safety of the Army of the Black Sea;
- (c) Persons arrested upon allegations that they had been guilty of ill-treatment of prisoners of war;

¹ Sir H. Rumbold had taken up his appointment in Constantinople on Nov. 17.

² No. 122 and enclosure.

- (d) Persons alleged to have been guilty of breaches of the armistice;
- (e) Persons alleged to have been guilty of massacres etc., of subject races or allied subjects in Turkey.

3. General Milne observes that of the above, class (b) have been detained as a matter of Military necessity, class (a) has to be considered with regard to the original reason for arrest in each individual case, concerning class (d) no evidence has been transmitted to the War Office, and class (e) contains persons deported on the initiative of the High Commissioner at Constantinople. He states that it is only with respect to class (c) that any cases can be submitted to the Attorney General, and this is in accordance with the remarks of the Law Officers in the third paragraph of their Memorandum referred to above.

4. As regards this latter class of prisoner General Milne goes on to say that early in 1919 a List was prepared of persons against whom it appeared that there would be some evidence of culpability available in respect of ill-treatment of British and Indian prisoners of war in Turkey and that from time to time arrests were made and these persons deported to Malta. On the 7th April 1920 he made a report to the War Office³ and in reply received a communication dated the 29th of May 1920³ informing him that on the 1st of November 1918, a Committee had been appointed by the Attorney General with the authority of the War Cabinet to enquire into and report upon the following:—

- (a) Facts as to the breaches of the Laws and customs of War affecting members of the British armed forces, or other British subjects, committed by the forces of the German Empire and their allies on land, on sea, and in the air, during the present war.
- (b) The degree of responsibility for these offences attaching to particular members of the German forces including the German General Staff or other highly placed individuals.
- (c) The situation and procedure of a tribunal appropriate to the trial of these offences.
- (d) Any other matters cognate or ancillary to the above which may arise in the course of the enquiry, and which the committee find it useful and relevant to take into consideration.

5. This Committee prepared a report—of which a confidential copy was sent to General Milne—giving a list of persons who it considered should be prosecuted.³ Upon receipt of this report, General Milne decided that, as no evidence of any weight was available here to supplement that which had already been communicated to the Commission, the report should be treated with one or two exceptions as final, and therefore practically all the persons not scheduled for prosecution were released.

6. The following persons, whose names appear in the Attorney General's Committee report as recommended for prosecution remained at Malta:—

³ Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

- 2680. Ahmet Tewfik Bey.
- 2694. Djemal Bey.
- 2700. Ahmed Djevad Bey.
- 2707. Mazlum Bey.
- 2732. Suleiman Numan Pasha.
- 2741. Yacob Gallus.⁴
- 2745. Tahir Bey.

7. In addition to the above, five other Turks are still detained at Malta in connection with charges of ill-treatment of prisoners of war, although their names do not figure on the Committee's list referred to.

8. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief further states that the prisoners of class (c) mentioned in paragraph 6 above are clearly identifiable with the individuals whose prosecution has been recommended by the Attorney General's Committee, but that he is not in a position to say how far the Committee is able to connect these persons with the evidence in their possession.

9. He considers that the doubts expressed by the Law Officers concerning the following persons are unfounded:—

- 2676. Djallal Bey.
- 2679. Tewfik Mehmet.
- 2680. Tewfik Ahmed.
- 2694. Djemmal Eff. Abdul.
- 2710. Hakki Ibrahim Bey.

The first named was repatriated as his name did not figure on the Committee's report and there was no evidence to show that there was a case for prosecution. The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief states that he has no evidence against any person of class (c) detained at Malta other than the following:—

The Attorney General's Committee's Report.
 Proceedings of a Commission held at Alexandria.
 Proceedings of a Commission held at Suez.

both the latter having taken place late in 1918 or early in 1919.

10. As regards the last paragraph of the memorandum by the Law Officers of the Crown, I have the honour to call Your Lordship's attention to the fact that the arrests of persons accused of ill-treatment of prisoners of war were not made on the instructions of the High Commissioner at Constantinople, as therein stated, but were effected on the responsibility of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Army of the Black Sea. I have therefore no data on which I could base any expression of opinion as to the possibility of release of any prisoners of this category, and it appears that their release or continued detention is a matter upon which the Military Authorities should now be called to decide according to the evidence which they have procured in each case.

⁴ Presumably the same as the German engineer Jakob Gallus referred to in Vol. IX, No. 646 enclosure, and Vol. X, Nos. 175, 201, 209.

11. As regards the possibility of release of prisoners interned at my instance, a Committee has been formed to examine these cases and the result will shortly be forwarded to Your Lordship. I would observe, however, that the arrest of a number of the more important political prisoners deported on Military grounds at the time of the Military Occupation of Constantinople⁵ was made by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief on his own responsibility and no recommendations are therefore being made concerning them. They are the persons, however, whose release it is probable the Nationalists would demand in exchange for the British prisoners in Anatolia.

I have, &c.,
HORACE RUMBOLD

⁵ See No. 24.

No. 178

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 22, 10.30 a.m.)

No. 1227 Telegraphic [E 14494/106/44]

Clear the line

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 21, 1920, 9.30 p.m.

Following received from Smyrna to-day.

I¹ saw M. Stergiades² today and he informed me that he is more optimistic about general situation. (? Greek) Government has declared that it proposes to follow late Government's Foreign policy³ and has requested him to remain at Smyrna.

It is however probable that General Paraskevopoulos⁴ and staff will be replaced. Greek High Commissioner would be happier if at least General Paraskevopoulos could remain and his staff be changed. He considers future of Smyrna depends on attitude of French and British Government[s] at Athens and that friendly collaboration with new Government will do much to assure continuation and eventual success of Greek undertaking here. In case of conflicting views between (? our) Government and new Greek Government he foresees disaster here. Present partial disaffection of Greek troops he considers a passing ebullition of feeling: sound temper of troops was evident yesterday when strong Nationalist attack was repulsed with heavy loss near Ushak.

New Government will (? maintain) command of officers at front.

In Smyrna itself there is general tranquillity with occasional demonstrations of Royalist soldiers. Last night about 300 military prisoners attempted to break out of goal [*sic*] without success.

¹ i.e. Mr. E. C. Hole, Acting Vice-Consul at Smyrna and representative there of the British High Commissioner in Constantinople.

² Greek High Commissioner for Smyrna.

³ As a result of the Royalist victory in the general elections held on Nov. 14, M. Venizelos had resigned and M. Rhallys had formed a new cabinet. See Vol. XII, Chap. III, Nos. 428 ff.

⁴ See No. 7.

Population which is almost entirely pro-Veniselos is much depressed but announcement that Greek High Commissioner has been maintained at Smyrna will do much to reassure them. He considers that any movement in direct settlement of Turkish affairs by Allies at Constantinople would very favourably affect position in Athens and Smyrna.

In spite of his verbal optimism it is evident that he is far from sure of the army.

Sent to British High Commissioner Constantinople No. 132. Repeated to Athens.

No. 179

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 22, 6.45 p.m.)

No. 1228 Telegraphic [E 14535/106/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 22, 1920, 5.20 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Latest military reports from Smyrna are less optimistic.

Following telegram No. 133 of November 21st received from my representative. Begins:—

My immediately preceding telegram.

Lack of discipline in army is beginning to be admitted even by Greek Headquarters. Kondylis, Officer Commanding Third Regiment, was mobbed by troops at Salihli and only escaped by hiding under coal in tender of train.

Greek Commander-in-Chief is to be replaced by General Papoulas.

This appointment lends colour to local apprehension that Greek Government will abandon Smyrna to Turkey after sufficient show of fight to enable them to declare to Entente that they cannot stand the strain. Papoulas would be admirable tool for this purpose: he is the creature of ex-King of Greece and when commanding at Patras in 1916 did not scruple to promote treason with Bulgaria and arrange communications with Central Powers through Salonica. Whether this appointment foreshadows such a policy or not it will be difficult for Greek High Commissioner to work with him.

Addressed to Constantinople, repeated to Athens. Ends.

¹ No. 178.

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 23, 1 p.m.)

No. 1232 Telegraphic [E 14577/3/44]

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 22, 1920, 10.35 p.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 1070 and 1071 November 9th¹ and 1096 November 15th [16th].²

Although Italian representatives here have been ostensibly scrupulously correct in their attitude throughout, whole Italian atmosphere has been pro-Kemalist and there is no doubt that Italian agents have had dealings with Nationalists. Specific cases are for obvious reasons difficult to adduce but reference may be made to visit to Angora in June last of Lieutenant Colonel Fago who made proposals to Kemalists i.e. to supply war material, arrange to export grain and raw materials from Anatolia to Italy, discuss economic concessions which were wanted by Italian Commercial interests and to provide further support to Nationalists.³

Whole attitude of Nationalists towards Italy makes it morally certain that they regard her as being on a special footing and pursuing policy of good relationship as opposed to that adopted by other Allies. Adalia is only area in Asia where there is allied occupation without a corresponding Nationalist 'Battle spite' officially so described by Nationalists. Italian ships in Black Sea ports enjoy immunity from interference by Nationalists whereas ours are boycotted and refused entry. On Italian side long continued presence in Rome of Kemalist envoys Ghalib Kemali Bey and Lieutenant Colonel Edib Bey and privileged position which former appeared to occupy is significant.

I am reporting more fully by bag.⁴

¹ No. 1070 (not printed) asked for observations on No. 1071 which was a repetition to Constantinople of document No. 170.

² Not printed. This had asked Admiral de Robeck to 'report fully our case against Italian Government', since the Italian Ambassador desired 'to enter into general exchange of views regarding Allied policy in Turkey in order to dispose of misunderstandings and suspicions'. Cf. No. 176, n. 5.

³ Cf. No. 93, n. 3.

⁴ In Constantinople despatch No. 1594 of Dec. 2, received Dec. 13, not printed.

*Note on the Military Situation created by recent events in Russia,
Caucasia, Turkey and Greece¹*

[E 15721/2719/44]

WAR OFFICE, [November 22, 1920]

I. PRESENT SITUATION IN EUROPEAN RUSSIA AND CAUCASIA

1. With the annihilation of General Wrangel's Army in the Crimea² the Soviet troops have disposed of their most important adversary in the field, and excluding certain insurgent bands in the Cis-Caucasia, there now only remain General Balahovitch's forces (11,000)³ and General Petlura's Ukrainian levies (30,000),⁴ which are now virtually eliminated, on the Russian Western front. There seems no reason to suppose that either of these commanders will be more successful than their predecessors General Miller, General Yudenitch, Admiral Kolchak, General Denikin⁵ and General Wrangel.

Although the immediate object of the Soviet Government must be to remedy the terrible economic condition of their country, there are few signs yet that they are prepared to sacrifice their aim of world wide revolution, which they are seeking to attain by propaganda aided by military pressure where circumstances are favourable.

2. On the Russian Western front the recognition by Russia of the independence of Finland, Esthonia and Latvia⁶ had left her with a seaboard of but 80 miles in the Gulf of Finland which, moreover, is closed by ice for a great part of the year. Such a situation must be intolerable to a great nation, and although Russia is too much occupied at present to attack the new States, there can be no doubt that she must eventually burst out to an ice free seaboard on the Baltic, absorbing in so doing the States of Latvia, Esthonia and Lithuania either with or without their concurrence, or the concurrence of anybody else.

3. Poland though she has successfully resisted the Bolshevik attack and has imposed a peace on Russia which gives her more territory than the Allies were prepared to grant her,⁷ makes no attempt to conceal the fact that she regards the peace as only a truce. Though each State suspects the other and appears to be firmly convinced that the conflict will be renewed, it is more

¹ This note by the General Staff formed Appendix E of a memorandum of Dec. 7. 1920, on the situation in Mesopotamia written by Gen. Radcliffe, the Director of Military Operations. A copy of the memorandum and its appendixes was received in the Foreign Office on Dec. 16.

² See No. 174.

³ See Vol. XI, No. 666.

⁴ For documents relating to the Hetman Petlura, see *ibid.*, Nos. 270, 565, 623, and 650.

⁵ For these White Russian commanders, see Vol. III, Chaps. I and II.

⁶ The Soviet Russian Government had signed peace treaties with Esthonia, Latvia, and Finland on Feb. 2, Aug. 11, and Oct. 14, 1920, respectively.

⁷ See Vol. XI, Nos. 603, 608, and 647.

probable that Russia will be the aggressor. There is a ready made *casus belli* at any time in the Ukrainian and White Russian movements which notwithstanding official denials Poland has hitherto supported. Coupled with these dangers is the fact that Poland blocks trade between Germany and Russia, which is probably an essential element in the economic reconstruction of Germany.

It is the accepted policy of Great Britain and her Allies to maintain the independence of Poland as defined by the Treaty of Versailles, and should Russia attack Poland we must be prepared to receive a new demand for assistance. It must always be remembered that a land-locked Poland with no independent access to the sea is militarily unsupportable and helpless commercially.

[4.] In the Caucasus the Bolsheviks, though still hampered by risings of the Cossack peoples in their rear and by revolts in Daghestan, have installed a Soviet Government in Azerbaijan which is independent only in name.⁸ The Azerbaijan Government has allowed the Bolshevik troops freedom of movement through their country, an opportunity which the Government of Russia has turned to account by combining with the forces of the Turkish leader Kiazim Kara Bekir to enforce the submission of Armenia.⁹ The Turkish forces have occupied Kars and Alexandropol, while the Bolshevik troops are at Shusha and Nakhitchevan, so that the territory of Armenia will probably shrink to the small triangle between the south-west shores of Lake Gorch, a point a few miles south of Erivan—Alexandropol, and the Russians and their Turkish allies can make use of the Julfa—Alexandropol—Kars—Sarikamish railway at discretion.

Georgia alone remains, and there can be no doubt but that she will fall into the Russian system on the same terms as the Azerbaijan Republic in default of assistance from the Entente Powers or open support from a reconstructed Turkey. When this is accomplished, the Tiflis—Baku railway and its extension to Alexandropol will be at Russia's disposal, and she will be free to move troops to the old Turkish frontier as in 1914.

5. The situation in Persia and Trans-Caspia¹⁰ has been dealt with in many papers and it is unnecessary [*sic*] to do more than repeat that we must anticipate the eventual reinforcement of the Russian forces on the southern shores of the Caspian and a possible advance into Persia from Enzeli, Tabriz and Astarabad, which it is probable the British force in North-West Persia has momentarily prevented.

II. PRESENT SITUATION IN TURKEY IN ASIA

6. The Turkish Government has delayed ratification of the Peace Treaty, and in the meantime three important events have occurred, namely, the defeat of Armenia, the elimination of Wrangel, and the political overthrow of Venizelos.¹¹ The Turks must now be elated, and are represented by a

⁸ See Vol. XII, e.g. Nos. 744, 747, 749, 802-3.

¹⁰ See Chap. III below.

⁹ Cf. Nos. 171 and 174.

¹¹ See No. 178, n. 3.

body of able and persistent adventurers who will not fail to turn to full account any opportunity which is offered. It may be instructive to remember in this connection Enver's return march to Adrianople in 1913. This he was able to make owing to the outbreak of hostilities between the erstwhile allies Greece and Bulgaria.

7. The two militant parties in Turkey which are working for the revision of the Turkish Treaty are—

(a) The Committee of Union and Progress, headed by Enver and Talaat.

(b) Nationalists, headed by Mustafa Kemal.

The former have, since they saw that there was no hope of influencing the terms of peace, for the time thrown in their lot definitely with the Bolsheviks, while the evidence in our possession appears to warrant the conclusion that the Nationalists, though anxious to secure Russian arms and ammunition, to intrigue, to obtain assistance from Italy, and to use Russian forces to recover Armenia, are not unanimously in favour of allowing the Bolsheviks to penetrate into Anatolia.

8. In dealing with the Turks it will be well to remember that Mustafa Kemal and Enver are rivals, that Enver has already been discredited by the Entente, and that his influence is probably greater in Russia than in Turkey itself. Any arrangement that is made with Turkey will have to be carried through with a representative Government, and this can only be obtained by amalgamating 'Young Turks' and 'Old Turks.' A new head will be necessary, and it seems probable that this will best be provided by Mustafa Kemal himself,¹² whose recognition should have the effect of driving Enver and Jemal into obscurity or finally into the arms of Russia to carry on their intrigues and personal ambitions in Central Asia, thus eliminating their influence on the Turkish problem proper.

III. EXISTING MILITARY RESOURCES OF—

A. RUSSIA

B. TURKEY AND TRANS-CAUCASIA.

A. *Russia*

9. The relative military resources of Russia and her neighbours are compared in the following table. Relative strengths are expressed for convenience by numbers representing *rifle and sabre fighting strengths* as the size of the formations vary, and, therefore, a comparison by formations is apt to be misleading. It should be noted that whereas the fighting strength figure of the Soviet Red Army is 396,000, the feeding strength of military personnel in the Army is about 1,000,000:—

¹² Mr. D. G. Osborne, a member of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, here commented: 'or perhaps better, Izzet Pasha'.

Neighbouring States				Soviet Army available reserve
	Rifles and sabres	Fronts	Present grouping on respective fronts	
Finland	60,000	} North-Western Front	14,600	} 220,200
Esthonia	20,000			
Latvia	28,000			
Lithuania	22,000			
Poland	145,000	} Western Front . .	52,500	
Roumania	120,000			
White Russian	19,000			
and	(to be raised to 45,000 by December).			
Ukrainian Movements . .	(?) 30,000			
*Georgia	30,000	} Caucasian	46,900	
*Armenia	40,000			
		Grand total west of Caspian	334,000	
		Trans-Caspia	23,200	
		Siberia	38,500	
			<u>61,700</u>	
Total	514,000	Grand total	396,000	

* In certain conditions which are discussed later these forces, or a portion of them, may have to be added to the resources of the Russian Bolshevik Government.

10. From the above table it appears that so long as the Red Army remains loyal the Russians, profiting from natural jealousies and the war weariness of her neighbours, have sufficient military resources to attack at least any one of their hostile neighbours between the Baltic and the Caspian Sea with a reasonable prospect of success.

11. As regards Trans-Caucasia, there are great natural obstacles to be overcome in military operations, and these are even more important military factors than the actual number of troops which might be available. Generally speaking, it is doubtful whether the Soviet Government could enforce its will on Afghanistan by military operations in the face of real national resistance on the part of the Afghans. It should, however, be quite practicable for it to employ sufficient forces to occupy and control the whole of Northern Persia, in view of the fact that the Persian Government has practically no armed forces at its disposal.

12. It would appear that the Soviet Government can only maintain itself in power by force of its army. The Red Army, by reason of its nature, must be kept in full employment, otherwise it will re-act on the Government. Hence we may expect to see that army in perpetual activity until the ambitions of Russia are satiated. In this connection a most important point to be considered with reference to the Russian Army is the want of clothing and boots. This disability during the coming winter, if maintained, will do more to render the forces innocuous in the coming spring than any shortage of arms

and ammunition. Every endeavour should consequently be made to prevent stocks purchased by Russia from reaching their destination.

B. Turkey and Trans-Caucasia

13. The Nationalist Army in Turkey may be divided into two portions:

- (1) The Eastern Army under Kiazim Bekir.
- (2) The Western Army under Mustafa Kemal.

Mustafa Kemal is nominally Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Armies, but he is believed to have little power over Kiazim Kara Bekir, who appears to represent the faction which is in closest alliance with the Russian Bolsheviks. Kiazim Kara Bekir's Army is tied up in Armenia and presumably could not yet be withdrawn without risk of a fresh rising on the part of the Armenians.

14. In the Western Army under Mustafa Kemal there are available to meet the Greeks or to threaten Lieut.-General Harington's command on the Ismid front three Turkish Army Corps or about 28,000 combatants, which might be reinforced from the corps in the Sivas-Samsun and the corps in the Diarbekir area. The state of the communications and the necessity for keeping troops in these latter areas limit the numbers available for reinforcements, and it is believed that the maximum force which could be employed by the Nationalists in the west can for the present be put at 30,000 regulars and 10,000 irregulars.

15. Turkey also has forces operating against the French in Cilicia and concentrating against the British in the neighbourhood of Jezireh on the Tigris. The function of these forces is probably rather to keep alive the Arab hostility to France and Great Britain for the present, than to undertake any direct operations on their own account, but they will inevitably seize any opportunity which may be offered to profit by the situation.

IV. PRESENT SITUATION OF THE ALLIES AT CONSTANTINOPLE AND IN TURKEY IN ASIA

16. The French and British troops in the neighbourhood of Constantinople amount at present to 15 battalions, plus one cavalry regiment, and will shortly be decreased by the departure of three battalions, so that the Entente is dependent on the Greek Army in Asia Minor, which recently amounted to eight divisions or 110,000 rifles and sabres and is holding a line from the Black Sea, north of Ismid, to the southern end of the Smyrna enclave. These formations were in course of reduction before the Greek election ending in the overthrow of M. Venizelos, a reduction, which although on a scale that would not have endangered the position of the Entente at Constantinople, was inevitable in view of the financial situation of Greece. It is impossible to say what effect the elections may have on the Greek Army or Greek policy, but it is certain that we must reckon with the probability that any formed Government may find itself unable to maintain the Army in anything approaching its present strength or indeed that the Army may disrupt itself automatically from reactionary causes due to aftermath of war.

V. FUTURE CONTINGENCIES

17. As regards the Baltic States it has been shown that Russia must eventually absorb these completely or reduce them to the position of provinces of Russia. No vital interests of the British Empire appear to be threatened by such action and it does not appear to be an issue which the Empire should pledge a single company of soldiers to influence.

18. As for Poland, in contrast to the situation in the Baltic States, the British Empire cannot stand aside without making an effort to maintain its independence which is a vital condition of the Treaty of Versailles. It appears certain that the Soviet Republic will sooner or later attack Poland, and the Allies will be called upon for assistance. The present resources of the British Army are not sufficient to add its quota to Allied armed assistance even if the people of Great Britain would tolerate it. Further, in the opinion of the General Staff the procedure should be confined to influencing the situation by endeavouring to remove the causes which are most likely to induce Russia to attack. The steps recommended to this end are the following:—

- (a) Assist Poland to make herself strong by giving her permission to buy such stores and material in Allied countries, or even Germany, as she can pay for.
- (b) Use every means to prevent Poland from adopting an aggressive and consequently foolish policy.
- (c) Discourage Polish assistance to the White Russian and Ukrainian movements.
- (d) Prevent or impede the re-equipment of the Bolshevik armies.

19. In the Caucasus the Russian Bolshevik Government, if it decided to pursue such a scheme and to diminish its commitments in other directions, is in a position (*vide* Part 2) to re-establish its previous frontier. Through [*sic*] communication by sea with Trebizond could be prevented by the Entente navies, and land communications west of the Nakhichevan–Kars railway are poor in the winter, aggravated by climatic conditions, there appears to be no reason to think that the Bolsheviks could not then establish themselves even at Erzeroum or on a line west of Erzingan through the Giaour Dagħ to the Black Sea, which they reached in 1917, unless the Turks can be persuaded to oppose them with united forces.

It will be remembered that before the Russian débacle in 1917 the Russians had established and maintained an army of about 250,000 men on this front and though they might not at present spare this number, there is no reason why, given time, the Soviet Government should not reproduce the same result as was accomplished in the Czarist *régime*. Once established on the above line the Bolsheviks would be in a position to choose their own line of advance either westward in support of the Turkish Unionist and Nationalist forces or southwards into Mesopotamia and Persia, by the routes leading from Erzeroum to Van and Mosul.

20. As regards Mesopotamia and Persia, it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss in detail this situation, but there is ample evidence to show

that the Bolsheviks are pursuing relentlessly their aim of striking at British power in both these countries. This they will continue to do by turning to account the instrument for propaganda placed in their hands by the terms of the present Turkish Treaty. Thus they may increase the likelihood of a recrudescence of the Mesopotamian troubles of this summer, which would force us to despatch large reinforcements if our position is to be maintained, and will vitally affect our position in Persia whether we decide to retain our troops in the country or not.

VI. CONCLUSION

21. An endeavour has been made to show that in Europe the situation is not such as will necessarily involve British military commitments, but the disappearance of Wrangel, the capitulation of Armenia, the imminent threat to Georgia and the downfall of Venizelos confront us with a situation in the Middle East with which it may be beyond our power to cope without a change of policy.

22. In the opinion of the General Staff recent events have shown clearly that whatever may be the outcome of the present crisis in Greece, it is unsafe to rely upon the Greek Army to cover the Allied position in Turkey, in support of which His Majesty's Government must be prepared either to—

- (a) Send reinforcements to Constantinople,
- (b) Withdraw the existing British troops, or
- (c) Re-adjust the Allied policy.

The first alternative, owing to the present state of the British military resources, is out of the question as a permanent measure. As regards the second, however desirable from a military point of view, a question of high policy is involved, and in any case a temporary reinforcement to effect withdrawal would probably be necessary. The General Staff, however, believe that a drastic revision of the territorial terms of the Turkish Treaty in respect of Smyrna, the province of Kars,¹³ and possibly of Thrace, would induce the Turkish Nationalists to break with the Russian Soviet Government. In short, the change in the Government of Greece, though it alters the situation of the British and Allied troops temporarily for the worse at Constantinople, gives the opportunity to make gracious concessions to the Turks, and so wean them from their alliance with the Russian Bolsheviks, by this means recreating Turkey as a buffer State between the Entente Powers and Russia, and removing some of the principal underlying causes of unrest throughout the British dominions in Egypt, Mesopotamia and India.

¹³ The four preceding words were underlined in the Foreign Office and a question-mark was written in the margin.

No. 182

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received November 27, 12.45 p.m.)

No. 1239 Telegraphic [E 14785/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 24, 1920, 7 p.m.

Minister for Foreign Affairs called yesterday for first time.

He began by stating that police would be paid their October salaries. I should explain that delay in paying police was causing British Military Authorities some anxiety and I had been pressing for their payment.

Minister for Foreign Affairs then said that messenger whom Turkish Government had despatched to Moustapha Kemal had returned, and had reported that latter was prepared to receive proposed Mission from Turkish Government. Mission, which would be under Izzet Pasha, would start in two or three days. As I inferred that Turkish Government meant to await return of Mission before ratifying treaty I pointed out that there would be further delay of at least three weeks from now. I reminded Minister for Foreign Affairs that he had himself stated that Turkish Government would be prepared to ratify within a month or thereabouts. This month would be up about the beginning of December. I said that it was imperative that Turkish Government should put an end to present unsatisfactory state of things by ratifying treaty. They were living from hand to mouth now but once they had ratified treaty they would know where they were.

Minister for Foreign Affairs admitted that present was most unsatisfactory, and made an appeal for financial facilities to carry on administration.

I said that, although treaty had shorn Turkey of much territory she was still a considerable State which would become prosperous if her economic resources developed and internal peace [were] restored. I would do my utmost to contribute to this when once treaty had been ratified.

My impression is however that Turkish Government will attempt to delay ratification and return of Mission.

No. 183

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received November 25, 11.30 a.m.)

No. 1246 Telegraphic [E 14697/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 24, 1920, 10 p.m.

My telegram No. 1234.¹

Following is translation of identic note which we are addressing to Porte, begins.

High Commissioners have the honour to inform Minister for Foreign Affairs that they have received from their Governments instructions as

¹ Of Nov. 23, not printed.

to reply to be made to his note of November 4th (i.e. note quoted in my telegram No. 1189).²

These instructions are to reiterate their former demand for ratification of treaty by Turkish Government. Accomplishment of this formality by Turkish Government is more urgent as it would imply on their part an indispensable disavowal of aggression against Armenia, which constitutes a violation in anticipation of treaty and a marked act of hostility against Allies, which has produced a great and deplorable impression on public opinion of the world and is liable to induce most serious consequences for Turkey.

Ratification is equally necessary in the interests of Turkish Government itself for reason already mentioned that although Allied Governments in their desire to furnish Turkey as soon as possible with means of improving her financial and economic situation have agreed to allow Financial Commission contemplated in Treaty which is alone competent to elaborate and apply these means of beginning work after Ratification by Turkish Government, they can go no further but maintain principle that no financial assistance can be given except by financial commission, whose assumption of activities is inevitably contingent upon ratification of Treaty by Turkish Government.

High Commissioners therefore request Turkish Government to ratify without delay and expect that this ratification will in any case take place before expiration of period mentioned in note under reply. They would wish to receive a definite assurance in this connection. Ends.

² No. 173.

No. 184

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople)

No. 1123 Telegraphic [E 14669/9075/44]

Very urgent. Confidential

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 25, 1920, 9 p.m.

Please see General Harington's telegram to War Office No. I.9558 of November 23rd.¹

Any further advance by the Greek troops is in present circumstances open to grave political objections. We are just entering on discussions with the French as to general policy to be adopted towards Greece if King Constantine returns² and pending a decision any further use of Greek troops might involve an obligation and a commitment to new Greek Government likely to cause embarrassment. Chief of Imperial General Staff has accordingly telegraphed to General Harington that proposed advance should not take place.

¹ Not printed. This telegram included the words 'Understand Manissa Division intend to carry out my orders to occupy Adabazar in few days . . .'. The Manissa Division was a Greek division stationed in the Ismid area.

² See Vol. VIII, Chap. XIV, and Vol. XII, Nos. 434, 435, 438-40, and 443-8.

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 30, 5.15 p.m.)

No. 1256 Telegraphic [E 14961/106/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 26, 1920, 2.35 a.m.

Following received from Smyrna yesterday:—

No change situation. It becomes every day clearer that general position depends entirely on attitude taken by Allied Governments with regard to King Constantine and a speedy and categorical decision is imperative. Greek High Commissioner said this morning that if Allies will not tolerate return of King, statement to that effect should be made at once.

(? Plebiscite) on subject would only aggravate internal situation; decision to appoint Prince George¹ would provide safe solution. High Commissioner still protests his confidence in moral of army but cases of insubordination and disaffection are admitted e.g. in cavalry at Magnesa: also some of divisional commanders are resigning among others General Nieder (? whose) resignation would I think be followed by others. General Alexander Mazarakis has resigned, and General Manetas commandant of 13th and General Ifqlis commanding Archipelago Division are hanging in balance.

High Commissioner says appointment of Papoulos is provisional² and . . .³ administrative purposes. It was apparently expected that Constantine would come as Commander-in-Chief: he added that if the Allies accept return of Constantine effective guarantee should be exacted that he will not make changes in military personnel to gratify old grudge.

General Nieder who commands on Ushak section stated that afternoon that moral of the troops is good but that line is too long and he advised retirement from . . .³ to Inei and Ellehen for the winter. His own retirement is enforced by conviction that his personal friendship with Veniselos would deprive him of confidence of new Government.

Orders have been issued for demobilisation of 1916, 1917, 1918 classes.⁴ Nationalists are becoming an organised army under the capable leadership of Ali Fuad. Sent to Constantinople No. 136.

Repeated to Athens. Ends.

¹ The eldest son of King Constantine.

² Cf. No. 179.

³ The text is here uncertain.

⁴ On Dec. 2, however, in his telegram No. 1265 (not printed) Sir H. Rumbold reported: 'General Papoulos has stated to my representative at Smyrna that orders for demobilization of 1916, 1917 and 1918 classes have been cancelled.'

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 30, 5.30 p.m.)

No. 1253 *Telegraphic* [E 14960/3/44]*

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 27, 1920, 8.10 p.m.

Impression is general in Allied circles here that present situation must inevitably lead to considerable modification of Turkish Treaty.

Turkish Government cannot fail to entertain hopes that this will be so, but Ministers are careful not to hint at it except in form of 'benevolent interpretation' without modification of text. Ministry for Foreign Affairs speaks of ratification in exactly the same way as before defeat of Veniselos. However paradoxical it may seem, it is within bounds of possibility that Government may now find Nationalist leaders willing to acquiesce secretly in the ratification, on theory that it would make things easier for Central Government without incommoding Nationalists, whose position has grown so strong that they would count upon revision even after Central Government had ratified. It is obviously impossible to form clear estimation of probable developments in Turkey until Greek situation has matured. Nevertheless it looks as if, apart from any other developments elsewhere, defeat of Armenia¹ must make partial revision necessary, and drastic revision will be unavoidable if Greek lapse² in Smyrna area, whether as a result of withdrawal of Allied support consequent upon return of Constantine, of dissension and demoralisation which may set in among Greek forces even without return of Constantine, or of voluntary renunciation by Greece of her acquisitions in Anatolia. Need for entirely new policy may at any moment become so urgent that I venture, though with serious diffidence, to submit at once following appreciation of new conditions as viewed from Constantinople:—

If revision of treaty becomes inevitable, it appears to me object of Allies should be to find solution which will—

1. Accelerate pacification of Asia Minor;
2. Enable Allies to emerge from situation with minimum of damage to their credit in eyes of East, and Turkish Nationalists in particular, and
3. Secure future well-being of non-Moslem minorities, notwithstanding concessions which it will be necessary to make to Turks.

Unless Allies are willing themselves to undertake difficult military operations in interior, first of these objects can now only be attained by going a long way to meet Nationalists. Latter may be expected now to have more extravagant pretensions than ever, but if it is true that there is a growing tension between them and Bolsheviks, and that large section of them fear infiltration of Bolshevik principles in Turkey, it might be possible to satisfy majority by some compromise, e.g., by including in future Turkey country up to old Russian frontier with local alteration only, converting Smyrna

¹ See Nos. 171 and 174.

² Presumably this should read: 'if Greeks collapse'.

area from purely Greek zone into specially administered vilayet under Turkish sovereignty accompanied by international control, and by making non-territorial dispositions somewhat less stringent.

Second object can, unfortunately, only be attained most imperfectly. Allies, however, need not cut quite so sorry a figure if they can give themselves appearance of coming in as 'honest brokers' between parties directly concerned in territorial settlement, and if they could manipulate situation so as to figure as protectors of Islam against Bolshevism³ and drive further wedge between Kemalists and Bolsheviks.

Third object is very important. It can only be secured by retaining as much control as possible over Turkish administration generally, and especially gendarmerie. I fully realise repugnance which must be inspired by any idea of treaty to suit Nationalists.

Also realise that they may be so encouraged by recent developments as to be unwilling to come into line just now on any terms at all which Allies could accept, that reports of acute tension between them and Bolsheviks may prove false, and that it will be no easy matter to adapt any new settlement to arrangements amongst Allies themselves. My object in foregoing analysis is not to put forward concrete proposals, but to suggest possible line of thought in new and complicated situation.

³ In a telegram (No. 1347 S) of Nov. 23 to the Secretary of State for India (copy of which was sent to Sir E. Crowe by the India Office and filed in the Foreign Office on Nov. 30) the Viceroy urged the desirability 'even at eleventh hour' of modifying the terms of the Turkish peace treaty 'with view to conciliation of Moslem opinion. We understand', he said, 'that one of the main preoccupations of His Majesty's Government has been, and is, to obtain through those terms greater security than before for British position in Asia. We feel that development and progressive embitterment of Moslem opinion regarding terms as they now stand has rendered that position much less secure than before the war . . . before war, British were, in spite of their acquiescence in result of Italian and Balkan victories over Turkey, regarded by bulk of Moslem opinion as friends of Islam, while Russians were considered its enemies; but since announcement of terms Britain has, in eyes of Asia, become arch (? enemy) of Islam, and future of Islam is in danger through British action. . . . In India itself, feeling against Turkish peace terms has steadily intensified under pressure of religious leaders and great personal influence of Gandhi. . . .'

No. 187

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received December 2, 5.30 p.m.)

No. 1263 Telegraphic [E 15082/10576/44]

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, December 1, 1920, 7.30 p.m.

My despatch 1566/W.2193.¹

Today a further meeting of three high commissioners, the delegates on debt, and financial advisers was held to consider serious financial situation arising out of refusal, for reasons which do not seem to us convincing, of Paris and London Committees of Ottoman Bank to advance remaining

¹ Of Nov. 26, not printed.

12,000² pounds required to pay balance of October salary and other expenses for month of October. Unless this money is forthcoming present Turkish Government may be unable (? to maintain) itself and we think it most advisable to avoid crisis here while our Governments are considering general policy in London. It is essential that this Government should remain in power for next fortnight to enable it to ratify treaty three days after arrival of its mission at Angora namely December 14th. See my telegrams Nos. 1250 and 1260.³

Constantinople directors of Ottoman Bank have recommended their Paris and London Committees to make necessary advances and my French colleague telegraphed on November 29th to his Government asking them to intervene with Paris Committee. I should be glad if Your Lordship can take similar action with London Committee.

It is true that same difficulty will recur in a month hence but consequences will be much less serious once ratification has been obtained as Financial Commission will have authority to deal with situation. We are insisting upon much stricter control of Turkish finance by centralizing of all receipts in one account controlled by delegates on Public Debt.

No disbursements will be made without sanction of above-mentioned delegates.

In the meantime I shall use (? before any) recurrence next month in an acute form, present financial crisis as a lever to induce Turkish Government to ratify.

² Amended in the Foreign Office to read '1,200,000'.

³ Of Nov. 26 and Nov. 30 respectively, not printed.

No. 188

Lord Hardinge (Paris)¹ to Earl Curzon (Received December 2, 11.30 p.m.)

No. 1368 Telegraphic [E 15083/9075/44]

Immediate

PARIS, December 2, 1920, 8.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 1252.²

Reply just received from Ministry for Foreign Affairs as follows:—

By terms of agreement reached between French and British Governments and in accordance with British proposals, the organization of inter-Allied command is closely bound up with that of Military Commission. That Commission can only enter on its functions simultaneously with the Financial and Straits Commissions which constitute a no less important part of

¹ Lord Hardinge had been appointed H.M. Ambassador at Paris on Nov. 27.

² Of Nov. 23, not printed. This referred to a statement by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that the French Government had not instructed their military representatives at Constantinople to collaborate with General Harington (see No. 167, n. 4) because H.M.G. had not accepted certain proposals made by the French Government in a note of Nov. 6 (not printed). Mr. Lindsay was instructed to inform the French Government 'that we concur and that formal acceptance will be notified in a Note shortly to be addressed to them'. For this, see No. 205 below.

programme which the three Governments have agreed to put in execution as soon as Treaty of Peace is ratified by Turkey. Present events obviously retard the execution of that Treaty and entry of Commissions on their functions. It follows that agreement reached in regard to exercise of inter-Allied command by General Harington, while retaining its full force, cannot at present be applied. In these circumstances the French Government consider that until ratification of Treaty or conclusion of a new agreement General Harington should be considered solely as successor of General Milne. The General Commanding French Force of Occupation will of course take fullest account in his relations with General Harington of latter's superior rank and of Command in Chief which Commander of British Force of Occupation is called upon to exercise. But until régime foreseen by the three Governments is put in force, General Charpy will have to be consulted in all important military decisions in movement and utilization of his troops, in placing of his units, and in all questions with which his predecessor was concerned.

Copy of note³ by bag tonight.

³ Not printed.

No. 189

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received December 13)

No. 1606 [E 15535/3/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, December 6, 1920

My Lord,

The Mission of the Turkish Government to Mustapha Kemal left for Angora on the 3rd instant, proceeding overland from Haidar Pasha. It is headed by Izzet Pasha, the Minister of the Interior, and comprises five other members, including Salih Pasha, Minister of Marine, and Hussein Kiazim Bey, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, besides a subordinate staff. Under an agreement with the General Officer Commanding the troops in Constantinople, the mission was accompanied by British Officers over the section of the Haidar Pasha Railway controlled by the British Authorities in order to ensure that it was not interfered with by the Greek posts.

2. If all goes well, the Mission should reach Angora about the 6th or 7th of December. The Nationalists, however, when defining the preliminary arrangements, intimated that representatives of the Angora Government would meet it at BILEDJIK, and it remains to be seen whether this will involve delay at that place. According to one report, which I give for what it is worth, the leaders of the Nationalist movement have no intention of allowing the Mission to proceed to Angora, and wish the negotiations to take place at Biledjik, lest Izzet Pasha should on reaching their capital attempt some *coup* designed to unseat Mustapha Kemal and to bring the Mission into relations with more moderate elements.

3. For the descriptions of the three members of the Cabinet included in the Mission, I would refer Your Lordship to my predecessor's despatch No. 1457/M. 1031/3 of the 26th October 1920.¹ The other members of the Mission are Fatin Effendi, a Khodja or member of the Ulema class, Djevad Bey, formerly Minister at Stockholm, and Munir Bey, Legal Adviser to the Sublime Porte. Fatin Effendi is practically unknown in European circles, but he was chosen presumably on grounds of religious influence, and he was brought to the notice of this High Commission some months ago as a person carrying great weight with Kiazim Karabekir Pasha, the Nationalist Commander in the Erzeroum area. Djevad Bey is well known in London, having been for some time Secretary at the Turkish Embassy not long before the war. He was subsequently Minister at Belgrade and Stockholm, but he has played no rôle since the Armistice. He may be defined as a typical Turkish diplomat of rather more than average ability and Union and Progress sympathies. Munir Bey is an industrious official of no particular importance.

4. Izzet Pasha, accompanied by Sefa Bey, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, called on me on the 2nd instant. The former did not give me any indication of the line he was going to take with the Nationalist Party, but I took the opportunity to ask His Highness to do his utmost to secure the release of the British prisoners of war, both civil and military, at present held by the Nationalist forces. I sent him a list of these prisoners in so far as their names are known to this High Commission. I informed His Highness that questions of prisoners of war greatly affected public opinion in England, and that if he could secure the release of these prisoners he would invest the Turkish Government with prestige in our eyes.

5. In the course of conversation allusion was made to the success His Highness had obtained in pacifying the Yemen some years ago. I understand, however, that his success was due to the fact that he gave way to the demands of the rebels.

6. As I have already reported to Your Lordship by telegraph,² the professed intention of the Government is to give the Mission time to enter into relations with the Nationalists and to explain to them the situation in Constantinople, and then to proceed with the ratification of the Treaty, without awaiting the results of any discussion, much less the return of the Mission to Constantinople. It would be rash to count with certainty on the fulfilment of this intention. If the Government act on it, they will do so with the sole object of obtaining financial relief, and perhaps with the idea at the back of their minds that the present course of events must end in the revision of the Treaty, whether it is ratified or not.

7. The prospects of the Mission achieving any success with the Nationalists on the basis of the acceptance of the Treaty in its present form are almost nil. The most that can be said is that they are a little brighter now than they were a couple of weeks ago, owing to the strain to which the relations between

¹ Not printed.

² Constantinople telegram No. 1266 of Dec. 2 (not printed) had transmitted a translation of the Turkish Government's reply of Dec. 1 to the High Commissioners' note in No. 183.

the Bolsheviks and the Kemalists have been subjected by recent developments in Armenia.³ It is possible that if this strain continues to make itself felt, and if the new Greek Government carries on more or less decidedly and successfully the Venizelist policy in Asia Minor, Izzet Pasha may find the Nationalist leaders at Angora in a relatively sober mood.

8. Of these two factors, the Greek alone could not possibly be conclusive, for, while the discovery that the fall of M. Venizelos did not necessarily entail the collapse of the Greeks in Asia Minor might discourage the Kemalists, it would leave them with their bitterest grievance and their strongest appeal to the mass of people intact. The other factor may prove to be of supreme importance, if matters come to a breach between Mustapha Kemal and the Bolsheviks. Mustapha Kemal has already had no little difficulty in reconciling many of his followers to the Bolshevik alliance. If Izzet Pasha and men of his way of thinking are sincere in anything it is in their apprehension that the infiltration of Bolshevism spells danger for Turkey, both because it is irreconcilable [*sic*] with Turkish ideas and traditions, and because the Bolsheviks must eventually stand for the old Russian imperialism. This will be the strongest argument they can use in any attempt to convert or to isolate Mustapha Kemal, but it is unlikely to be successful unless the idea of collaboration with the Bolsheviks has already struck on concrete causes of quarrel such as Armenia or Batoum.

9. In the conversation which I have mentioned above Izzet Pasha himself spoke of the Bolshevik factor, and said that his information was that the Kemalists, though in relations with the Bolsheviks, were not committed to them.

I have, &c.,
HORACE RUMBOLD,
High Commissioner

³ A Soviet Government had recently been established in Armenia; see Vol. XII, Nos. 634 and 639.

No. 190

Earl Curzon to Lord Hardinge (Paris) and Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

No. 1278¹ Telegraphic [E 15221/10576/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 8, 1920, 6 p.m.*

{ My despatch No. 3523 of 28th October.²

{ Your telegram No. 462 of 17th October.²

(Establishment of Financial Commission.)

There appears to be possibility that Ottoman Government will ratify treaty by 15th December.

In view of disastrous state of Turkish finances, it is of utmost importance that Financial Commission should be able to enter on its duties at once and devise constructive and comprehensive scheme of relief. This will require some preliminary consideration.

¹ No. 1278 to Paris, No. 534 to Rome.

² Not printed.

Allies have insistently pointed out to Turkish Government advantages that would accrue to them from immediate ratification of the Treaty, and prompt arrival at Constantinople of French/Italian delegate is therefore a matter of urgency.

Please approach French/Italian Government immediately in this sense.

Repeated to Constantinople No. 1155.

No. 191

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople)

No. 1156 Telegraphic [E 5303/106/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 9, 1920, 12.15 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1275 (December 5th:¹ proposed advance to Ada Bazar).

In the event of military situation being so precarious as to render either retirement or advance imperative, I should be prepared to withdraw my objections to an advance to Ada Bazar.² I hope, however, that no advance will be considered necessary.

¹ Not printed.

² See No. 184.

No. 192

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received December 11, 10.50 a.m.)

No. 1293 Telegraphic [E 15475/10576/44]

Very urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, *December 10, 1920, 8.5 p.m.*

At to-day's meeting of High Commissioners a letter from Sir A. Block was read¹ declaring that financial control which delegates on Public Debt were endeavouring to establish remains ineffective owing to obstructive attitude of Minister of Finance. We agreed to address to Porte a strong joint note² insisting upon necessity of extending control which at present covers only Customs receipts and proceeds of sales of material to all receipts and expenditure failing which our assistance in financial matters would be withdrawn.

Sir A. Block also points out that situation of Treasury is now more desperate than ever. By the end of December deficit will amount to £4,500,000 Turkish in round figures. The principal danger arises out of presence in Constantinople of some 20,000 military and naval officers, mostly unemployed, who insist on payment and terrorize Ministry of Finance and of many thousand returned Turkish prisoners of war who must be rationed.

¹ A copy of this letter of Dec. 9 was forwarded to the Foreign Office under cover of Constantinople despatch No. 1653 of Dec. 17, not printed.

² Cf. No. 206 below, para. 4.

As (emphasized) in my predecessor's telegram No. 1121,³ my telegrams Nos. 1263⁴ and 1281⁵ and my despatch 1605 of December 6th⁶ the only possibility of ameliorating situation lies in early constitution of Financial Commission. Unfortunately in spite of repeated promises, no French Commissioner has been appointed and Italian Commissioner is still absent. I would urge that immediately on ratification by Turkish Government, Financial Commission should be constituted, French and Italian members if still absent being replaced by temporary delegates and that Commission should be empowered to make on behalf of their Governments advances necessary to avert complete and disastrous financial and administrative collapse with which this Government is actually threatened.

³ No. 158.

⁵ Of Dec. 5, not printed.

⁴ No. 187.

⁶ Not printed.

No. 193

*Letter from Sir J. Tilley to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)*¹

[E 15089/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 10, 1920

For your private information I may tell you that we have received a secret report² that on September 5th a letter was sent to Mustapha Kemal by Ghalib Kemali Bey, his agent at Rome. It is believed to have been taken either by the Albanian Vlora³ or by Fago,⁴ who was at Angora in the summer.

According to the report the letter contained an account of the visit paid to Ghalib Kemali by the Chief of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The latter is reported to have stated that the Italian Government favoured a strong Turkey to counter-balance certain States which had been unduly enlarged. The present Italian Government, he said, like the preceding one, had given proof of their goodwill by supporting Turkey at the Peace Conference and by bringing to their own way of thinking certain other Powers who only pursued economic advantages in the East. They had appointed an Ambassador to Constantinople before the Turkish Treaty had been ratified; they had chosen for this post Garroni, who had been their Ambassador before the war;⁵ and they had at least connived at the help given by Italian business men and artisans to the Nationalists. These things proved their sincerity.

The Chief of the Political Department continued that the Italian Government greatly regretted to see Turkey weakened by internal divisions. He

¹ The beginning and ending of this letter were evidently added in manuscript on the despatched copy: they are not recorded on the filed copy.

² This report of Oct. 22, received in the Foreign Office on Dec. 3, is not printed.

³ A member of the Albanian Club in Constantinople through which the Turko-Italian Friendship Association worked.

⁴ See No. 180.

⁵ See No. 127.

urged that the Turks should face the facts and limit their claims to what they might reasonably expect. The Italian Government were again and for the last time, prepared to show their friendship to Turkey and to Moslems in general by mediating between the Constantinople Government and the Nationalists and, after effecting this reconciliation, by mediating between the Turks and the Entente. At the same time the Chief of the Political Department asked that Garroni should be informed of the position and plans of the Anatolian forces and of their final terms for the conclusion of agreements, firstly with the Central Government, and secondly with the Entente.

In conclusion, the Chief of the Political Department is reported to have told Ghalib Kemali to come to him if he had any difficulty in communicating.

Ghalib Kemali is said to have advised Mustapha Kemal to take advantage of the Italian offer.

You will agree that if this story is genuine it is a remarkable revelation.

No. 194

Lord Hardinge (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received December 14)

No. 3688 [E 15587/10576/44]

PARIS, December 12, 1920

My Lord,

With reference to my telegram No. 1386 of December 10 informing Your Lordship of the intention of the French Government to send Monsieur Declausières as French Financial Commissioner to Constantinople,¹ I have the honour to inform you that I referred to the subject this morning in conversation with the President of the Council. He told me that orders had been given to Monsieur Declausières to proceed at once to Constantinople, and that he would probably arrive there simultaneously with the Italian Commissioner so that the Commission would be able to set to work with the least possible delay.

It is practically certain that as soon as Monsieur Declausières arrives in Constantinople he will claim the Presidency of the Financial Commission, to which we have already agreed, but in view of the refusal of the French Government to recognise General Harington as President of the Inter-allied Military Commission,² I would recommend that we should not recognise Monsieur Declausières as President of the Financial Commission until a similar status has been accorded to General Harington. If Your Lordship approves of the idea, the question remains whether this should be told to the French Government now or on the arrival of Monsieur Declausières at Constantinople. I would suggest the former alternative as a step of a more friendly character.

Your Lordship's telegraphic instructions of the 8th December³ point to the possibility of an early ratification of the Treaty of Sèvres by the Ottoman Government, and imply that the Allies are also of opinion that advantages

¹ Not printed.

² See No. 188.

³ No. 190.

would accrue to them from immediate ratification. I therefore asked Monsieur Leygues⁴ this morning what his views were on the subject. He replied with some vehemence that nothing would induce the French Government to ratify the Treaty of Sèvres as it stands. Though there might be twenty French Governments succeeding each other, not one of them would be allowed by the Chamber to ratify the Treaty. He had impressed upon the Committee for Foreign Affairs and the French Press that he and his Government were opposed to revision but that they favoured adaptation or modification of the Treaty, and he maintained that in this view he was in agreement with His Majesty's Government, and that in two or three weeks' time he would meet members of His Majesty's Government and discuss with them such modifications as might be necessary to make in the Treaty to meet the new situation created at Athens. He strongly urged the necessity of making these modifications without undue delay and before events forced the Allied Governments to take hasty and perhaps what might prove rash decisions. He continued that the creation of Soviets in Armenia,⁵ the appearance of Bolshevik agents at Teheran, and the attempts of the Bolsheviks to make terms with Kemal who was showing unwillingness to join with Bolshevism against the Allies,⁶ made it imperative for the Allies to come speedily to terms with Kemal and thus to prevent a homogeneous bolshevist policy in the Caucasus and Asia Minor, and that it was only by coming to terms with Mustapha Kemal in connection with Smyrna that this could be achieved.

There is no doubt that feeling in French official circles is entirely opposed to the ratification of the Treaty of Sèvres in its present form, and that to help them in their commitments in Syria and Cilicia, an agreement with Kemal on the basis of the restoration of Smyrna to Turkish sovereignty is regarded as essential to their Foreign Policy.

I have, &c.,

HARDINGE OF PENSURST

⁴ French President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵ See No. 189, n. 3.

⁶ Cf. Vol. VIII, No. 98, minute 2 (p. 846).

No. 195

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received December 14, 10.40 a.m.)

No. 1299 Telegraphic [E 15585/10576/44]

Urgent

CONSTANTINOPLE, *December 13, 1920, 8.45 p.m.*

My telegram No. 1293.¹

Following are terms of an identic telegram. Begins:—

Financial situation of Turkish Treasury is increasingly critical and grave. Banks refuse further advances on arrangements² of material considering

¹ No. 192.

² In the Foreign Office it was suggested that this word should be 'stocks'.

that they do not constitute a sufficiently secure guarantee. Sir A. Block has proposed to employ 252,000 Turkish gold pounds under sequestration in Ottoman Bank as subsidiary guarantee for advances to be made.

This guarantee would only be operative if advances were not covered by sales of materials within six months. May I, acting in concert with my colleagues, authorise this arrangement it being understood that this advance would be made only in the event of cessation of present resistance by Minister of Finance to effective Allied financial control? Ends.

With reference to above, French High Commissioner has received instructions from his Government authorising arrangement proposed by Sir A. Block.

Italian High Commissioner is telegraphing to Rome in identic terms. Request Your Lordship's instructions.

No. 196

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received December 17, 3.30 p.m.)

*No. 1307 Telegraphic [E 15765/3/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, December 16, 1920, 11.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 1266 of 2nd December.¹

Turkish Government are again showing signs of disinclination to ratify treaty notwithstanding definite promise of Minister for Foreign Affairs that as soon as Izzet Pasha Mission reached Angora Government would merely wait a few days necessary to allow mission to explain situation to Nationalists, and would then ratify treaty whether Nationalists acquiesce or not.²

Explanation offered by Government is that no news has been received from mission since it left. This is apparently true so far as any official news is concerned. There is, however, no doubt that mission reached Angora over a week ago.³ Real reason for Government's continued failure to ratify is their desire to wait on events in Greece and elsewhere, especially in view of indications in press from Allied capitals that Allied statesmen have definitely made up their minds that treaty must be modified. French Premier's statement to Senatorial Commission on 8th December has had particularly unsettling effect.⁴ I continue to press for ratification. I have said that I know nothing of any intention to modify treaty, but that even if there were to be modifications they can only be effected after much consideration; that chance of such modifications constitutes no valid reason for delay in fulfilment of promise mentioned above; and that, on the contrary, Turkish Government

¹ Not printed.

² Cf. No. 189, para. 6.

³ In his telegram No. 1314 of Dec. 18 (not printed) Sir H. Rumbold reported that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had that day informed him that the mission had reached Angora on Dec. 8.

⁴ See *The Times*, Dec. 10, 1920, p. 9. M. Leygues' speech had included a statement that it would be necessary to modify the Treaty of Sèvres and to make 'a peace which would have due regard for Moslem susceptibilities'.

should on its side proceed at once with ratification both in order to prove good intentions and to pave the way for institution of Financial Commission, which can alone afford permanent relief in the now desperate financial situation.

I spoke generally on those lines to Grand Vizier on 13th December, and I caused explicit statement in same sense to be made to Minister for Foreign Affairs later on same day.⁵ Grand Vizier spoke as though he acquiesced, though he gave me no further definite promise. Minister for Foreign Affairs argued that situation had entirely changed and that French Premier's statement made it difficult to ratify without exposing Government to damaging crisis. He did not deny obligation to fulfil promise previously given, but he urged that we should not press Government too hard.

My French colleague and Italian appear to be working on same lines as myself, and I do not despair of obtaining ratification. Prospects are, however, not very encouraging.

⁵ In Foreign Office telegram No. 1174 of Dec. 18 (not printed) Sir H. Rumbold's language was approved.

No. 197

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received December 24)

No. 1661 [E 16078/10576/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, December 18, 1920

My Lord,

An economic crisis of great gravity has suddenly developed side by side with the financial crisis through which the Government is passing.

2. Two days ago there was a break of 30 points in the Turkish exchange as expressed in terms of sterling, the pound sterling appreciating to 535 piastres. Yesterday there was a further fall in the value of the Turkish pound which now stands at about six to the pound sterling.

3. This situation has created great alarm amongst the Banks. The Ottoman Bank as holder of a large amount of Turkish paper is especially concerned. The Managers of the leading Banks met on the 15th instant at the Imperial Ottoman Bank to discuss the question of the present financial situation on the Constantinople market. From a perusal of the Minutes of the Meeting it is interesting to note that there was considerable difference of opinion as to the causes of and the remedies for the economic crisis. The Bank Managers finally voted the following resolutions:—

- (i) Not to make any advances in Turkish pounds against deposits of foreign currency.
- (ii) To abstain from all exchange operations either by the purchase or sale of exchange except in the case of commercial operations effected by a merchant, such operations to be liquidated by the Bank which sells to or buys exchange from that merchant.

- (iii) To insist that in the case of every operation conducted through the intermediary of brokers the name of the buyer should be revealed at the moment of the conclusion of the operation.
- (iv) It transpired at the meeting that there was a great deal of speculation in exchange taking place at places outside the Bourse, and it was decided to approach the High Commissioners with a view to putting a stop to this outside speculation.
- (v) The Ottoman Bank have explained to me that this question of exchange is particularly serious in view of its possible effect on the payment for food supplies for this town. Flour and other commodities consumed here come from America and naturally have to be paid for in dollars, but there is no exchange, at the present moment, with which to effect these payments. There is a consequent danger that further consignments may be stopped. It was also explained to me that the British Army of Occupation, British ships in harbour here and this High Commission provide a certain amount of exchange. Since the reduction of the British Army of Occupation the amount of exchange so furnished has naturally decreased. The French Army of Occupation is financed by means of loans here so that it does not create any exchange. Exports have practically ceased, and the situation generally is viewed with apprehension.
- (vi) As a temporary palliative the Ottoman Bank yesterday applied to the High Commissioners for authorisation to sell £100,000 sterling in gold, their own property. The High Commissioners decided that they could not grant this authorisation in the case of one Bank only, and that if it were granted to the Ottoman Bank it would have to be granted to all the other Banks and to private individuals. There was a feeling that a general authorisation might lead to a considerable export of gold which might hamper the operations of the Financial Commission to be set up under the Treaty. The matter was referred to the Financial Advisers to the High Commissioners for report.
- (vii) Meanwhile I have been informed by the Inter-Allied Delegate on the Economic Committee that it will be necessary to put up the price of flour. This will still further aggravate the situation of those officials who have not been paid salaries for two months.
- (viii) I am aware that for some time past, and in fact as far back as the beginning of last year, attention was drawn to the gravity of the financial situation in this country. The cry of wolf has been repeated so frequently that people have got accustomed to thinking that the Government and the country will be able to pull through somehow or other, but it does seem now as if we had touched bed-rock, and as if a financial and economic collapse were imminent.
- (ix) I see no permanent solution of the exchange difficulties until there is a reconciliation between the Government and the Kemalists and Anatolia is opened up again to foreign intercourse. Meanwhile, the Greeks have

complicated the situation by prohibiting the despatch of supplies to the capital.

I have, &c.,
HORACE RUMBOLD

P.S. Since writing the above I have received a letter on the subject of the economic and financial situation from the Ottoman Bank copy of which I have the honour to enclose herewith.¹

¹ Not printed.

No. 198

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon
(Received December 24)

*No. 1321 Telegraphic [E 16085/3/44]**

Confidential

CONSTANTINOPLE, December 21, 1920

My telegram No. 1307 of 16th December.¹

I again spoke to Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday about ratification.² I gave him translation of statement which I had noticed in English papers of 11th instant defining attitude of His Majesty's Government towards Turkish Treaty, and stating that three Allied Powers were acting together in absolute union.³ I also read him his note of 1st December enclosed in my despatch No. 1623 of 10th December, promising ratification after Government delegates had entered into contact with Nationalists.⁴

I said that Mission had now been at Angora for twelve days. Time had therefore come for Turkish Government to redeem their promise.

Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that situation had changed since above-mentioned note had been written, and he repeated arguments against acting hastily in the matter of ratification. He instanced statement made by French Prime Minister,⁵ as also a report he had seen that Count Sforza had stated that it would be more easy to modify Treaty of Sèvres as that instrument had not been ratified.

I observed that I knew nothing of any such statement on the part of Count Sforza.

The Minister said that if Turkish Government were to ratify now, such a proceeding might result in irretrievable disaster and throw Nationalists into the arms of Bolsheviks. Ratification would produce a deplorable effect. He

¹ No. 196.

² In his despatch No. 1660 of Dec. 18 (not printed) Sir H. Rumbold had reported the representations about ratification which he had made to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs in an interview on Dec. 16.

³ The reference appears to be to the communiqué issued at the close of the Second Conference of London (see Vol. VIII, Chap. XIV) and printed in *The Times* of Dec. 6, p. 12. The communiqué included the statement that 'the Treaty of Sèvres will not be abandoned'.

⁴ Not printed; cf. No. 189, n. 2.

⁵ See No. 196, n. 4.

therefore pleaded for a still further delay to enable Government to enter into communication with their mission, and he hinted that there was prospect of that mission coming to satisfactory agreement with Nationalists.

I said that elements who would be further estranged would be only extremist elements who had already burnt their boats, and I told Minister for Foreign Affairs that my own impression was that Turkish Government were making ratification depend on acquiescence of Nationalists and that Government were not serious in their declarations that they would ratify. Minister for Foreign Affairs disputed this view but I am nevertheless convinced that Turks are pursuing a Micawber⁶-like policy in this matter, I cannot shift Minister for Foreign Affairs from his position with result that three Allied Governments must consider how long they are prepared to wait for fulfilment of definite promise by Turks to ratify after their mission had entered into contact with Nationalists.

In view of importance attached by Turkish Government to utterances of French Prime Minister and to press statements regarding probable modification of treaty, and in order to avoid all possibility of misunderstanding, I think it would be very desirable that my colleagues and I should be again definitely instructed that prompt ratification is indispensable. Such instructions appear to be all the more necessary inasmuch as French High Commissioner must naturally be somewhat embarrassed by pronouncement of French Prime Minister, and has become rather lukewarm in applying pressure to Turkish Government to ratify.⁷

It is worth considering whether Turks should not be summoned to ratify by a certain date.

⁶ Mr. Micawber, a character in Charles Dickens's novel *David Copperfield*, who was always waiting for something 'to turn up'.

⁷ In his following telegram (No. 1322 of Dec. 21, not printed) Sir H. Rumbold reported that his French colleague had told him that morning that he had had an interview with the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs two days previously and had spoken to him in very energetic terms about the ratification of the peace treaty. Sir H. Rumbold added that he therefore wished to correct the impression he had conveyed in No. 198 that 'my French colleague is somewhat lukewarm in this matter'.

No. 199

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople)

No. 1187 Telegraphic [E 16002/10576/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 24, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1302 (of the 15th December.¹ Financial situation of the Turkish Govt. Proposed release of £.T.252,000 gold).

We concur in the French proposal that the £.T.252,000 gold should be considered as forming part of the stocks which the Allied Governments have agreed to release to the Turkish Government. You are therefore authorised

¹ Not printed. This referred to No. 195.

to agree to the release of that sum on the understanding that the funds obtained thereby will be under the control of the Ottoman Debt Council pending the appointment of the Financial Commission.

No. 200

Lord Hardinge (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received December 28)

No. 3808 [E 1434/443/44]

PARIS, December 24, 1920

My Lord,

Mr. Lloyd George's remarks on the Treaty of Sèvres in the House of Commons on Wednesday,¹ a full report of which reached Paris yesterday, have been received by the French Press with a chorus of resentment and disapproval. The 'Temps' in particular publishes an article so hostile to Great Britain and couched in such aggressive language that I feel obliged to call Your Lordship's special attention to its text enclosed herein.² 'England,' says the 'Temps', (which uses the bestowal of a Greek decoration by King Constantine on Admiral Kelly to throw suspicion on British policy)³ 'is protecting Constantine against France. She is also protecting, against both France and Italy, the treaty which gives the Greeks Smyrna, Gallipoli, and Adrianople.' After sketching the situation in the Near East on these lines, the article summarises British policy as aiming at the protection of, or protectorate over, Constantinian Greece; the mastery of the Eastern Mediterranean and of the Straits; the establishment of a Zionist State in Palestine; the encouragement of Feisal and the Hedjaz; the use of the Greeks against the Turks and of the Government of Constantinople against that of Angora; the partition of Moslem Asia with the Bolsheviks; the occupation of Mesopotamia; and the political and military domination of Persia. The 'Temps' does not hesitate to conclude its indictment of British policy by intimating that the Turkish troops who are fighting the French in Cilicia and Northern Syria receive arms and munitions by sea with the connivance of the British naval authorities. It finally exhorts the French Government to enter into an immediate and independent agreement with the Angora Government so as to bring about the evacuation of Cilicia and the French zone of occupation in Northern Syria; and to reinforce the French troops in the neighbourhood of the Straits.

When a sober newspaper like the 'Temps' writes in this strain, it is only to be expected that less responsible journals should follow suit. 'Pertinax', in the 'Echo de Paris', and Monsieur Bainville in the 'Action Française', though less venomous than the writer of the 'Temps' article, attack Monsieur Leygues for his supine attitude towards British policy; the 'Figaro' endorses the views of the 'Temps'; while the 'Journal' publishes an article entitled 'England desires the Hegemony of the East.'

¹ Dec. 22. See 136 *H.C. Deb.* 5s., cols. 1893-1901.

² Not here printed.

³ See Vol. XII, Nos. 487, 489, 490-1.

The underlying sentiment in these attacks on the Prime Minister is that of disappointment that His Majesty's Government have no intention to revise the Treaty of Sèvres, which public opinion in France regards as necessary not only as a weapon against King Constantine, but also as the only feasible measure to relieve France from the pressure of heavy commitments in Syria and Cilicia. The abandonment of Cilicia is regarded as 'chose jugée' as soon as it may be possible from a military point of view to withdraw the French troops, and the fate of the Armenians who will be abandoned is disregarded. It is this public opinion sustained and encouraged by the Press that has to be taken into account.

It is unfortunate that the signature of the Anglo-French Convention on the boundaries of Palestine⁴ should have coincided with Mr. Lloyd George's speech. I am reporting on this subject separately.⁵ The hostility roused by what is known of that agreement certainly contributes to the present disagreeable tone of the French Press.

I have, &c.,
HARDINGE OF PENSHURST

⁴ See No. 355 below.

⁵ Paris despatch No. 3809 of Dec. 24, not printed.

No. 201

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople)

No. 1190 Telegraphic [E 16085/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 26, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1321 (of Dec. 21¹—Ratification of Treaty of Sèvres).

Pending the clearing of the situation in Greece it will be better to make no further representations in favour of immediate ratification.

¹ No. 198.

No. 202

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon

(Received January 1, 1921, 3.30 p.m.)

*No. 1339 Telegraphic [E 12/1/44]**

CONSTANTINOPLE, *December 29, 1920, 2 p.m.*

Grand Vizier has informed my French colleague that he has instructed mission to Mustapha Kemal by telegraph to return to Constantinople, as he considers mission has been at Angora quite long enough.

Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that Turkish Government had received private information from a person just arrived from Angora that Izzet Pasha had announced to him his intention of starting for Constantinople on 29th December.

No. 203

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Buchanan (Rome)

No. 547 Telegraphic [E 16053/3/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 29, 1920, 3.55 p.m.*

(Suggested discussion with Mustapha Kemal.)

Italian High Commissioner at Constantinople has told his British and French colleagues that he has suggested to the Italian Government despatch of a representative to discuss with Mustapha Kemal exercise of Italian rights at Adalia and Heraclea. British and French High Commissioners pointed out to Marquis Garroni that this would mean recognition of Mustapha Kemal and was therefore objectionable.¹

French Government have instructed the French Ambassador in Rome to remind the Italian Government that at the recent Allied conference it was agreed to act only in concert;² that the strength of the Allies depended on their agreement while independent action would only prejudice joint negotiations without benefitting anybody; and that the Allies would deal with the Turkish problem as soon as they knew the attitude of the Greek Government and the result of the mission sent by the Turkish Government to Mustapha Kemal.

His Majesty's Government fully endorse the views of the French Government. Please support the representations made by your French colleague.³

¹ Sir H. Rumbold had reported this conversation with the Italian High Commissioner in his telegram No. 1325 of Dec. 22 (not printed) to Lord Curzon.

² See Vol. VIII, No. 99, minute 2 (pp. 852-3).

³ Sir H. Rumbold was informed of the French Government's action and of these instructions to Sir G. Buchanan in Lord Curzon's telegram No. 1195 of Dec. 29, not printed.

No. 204

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople)

No. 1197 Telegraphic [E 16002/10576/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 29, 1920, 6 p.m.*

My telegram No. 1187 (of the 22nd [24th] December;¹ financial situation of the Turkish Government).

Treasury urge the immediate appointment, before the coming into force of the Treaty, of the Financial Commission which alone can deal with the critical financial situation, and recommend that the Turkish Government should undertake to pay the expense incurred by the Commission before ratification in the same way as it will bear the expense after the Treaty comes into force.

It appears to us that if Commission is thus set up we may thereby lose our strongest and perhaps only lever for obtaining early ratification. On the

¹ No. 199.

other hand Sir A. Block's letter enclosed in your despatch No. 1653 of December 17th² contains a powerful plea against further delay, and in any case it must remain doubtful whether mere financial difficulties would induce Turkish Government to ratify.

Please consult with your colleagues and report by telegraph whether you consider that on the whole it would be more advantageous, or the contrary, for us to press for immediate setting up of the Financial Commission with authority to inaugurate remedial measures.

² See No. 192, n. 1.

No. 205

Earl Curzon to Lord Hardinge (Paris)

No. 4193 [E 15976/9075/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 31, 1920*

My Lord:—

With reference to previous correspondence regarding the execution of the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, I have to inform Your Excellency that the following points recently formed the subject of unofficial discussions with Representatives of the French and Italian Governments. They have now received the formal endorsement of His Majesty's Government and I should be grateful if you would embody them in a Note to the French Government, adding that His Majesty's Government would be glad to receive at as early a date as possible a formal assurance of their concurrence.

2. Certain further points that were discussed and tentatively agreed upon at the same time have not received the approval of the Department of His Majesty's Government concerned and they must therefore be left for further discussion or for eventual settlement by the Commissions themselves at Constantinople; these include the salaries of the delegates to the Financial and Straits Commissions, the accommodation of these two Commissions at Constantinople and the installation and journey expenses of the Financial delegates.

(1) The first President of the Military Commission of Organization and Control, with which post is combined the Supreme Allied Command, is to be British.

The Chairman of the Financial Commission and the President of the Naval Commission are to be French and the Presidents of the Straits and Air Commissions are to be Italian.

All these posts are to be held for two years from the coming into force of the Treaty of Peace with Turkey and are to be held in rotation by the representatives of the three Powers, so that for each two-year period the three chief Commissions shall be shared among the three Powers. For this purpose, the life of the Military Commission shall be extended from five to six years.

(2) In the case of its being found necessary to institute any of the Commissions before the ratification of the Treaty, it is understood that the period of the Presidency between the date of its assumption and the coming into force

of the Treaty of Peace shall not be counted in the two-year period commencing with the ratification: this applies similarly to the Supreme Command.

(3) It is understood that the various Commissions shall (with certain exceptions, notably as regards the purely financial decisions of the Financial Commission) be under the general authority of the Allied diplomatic representatives at Constantinople so as to avoid the loss of time involved in unnecessary reference to the respective Governments.

(4) Each Government shall settle the duration of the functions of its delegates and their relations to itself.

(5) So far as is practicable, the respective delegates shall receive uniform salaries. The supplementary salaries of the President of the Straits Commission and of the Chairman of the Financial Commission shall be One thousand Turkish pounds gold.

These sums shall be converted on the basis of dollar exchange.

(6) In appointing a Secretary-General of the Commission and an Inspector-General of Customs (see Article 246) and any other officers of similar status the Financial Commission will have regard to the desirability of distributing such posts equally so far as possible between the nationals of the three Allied Powers.

(7) The British Military Representative, General Sir C. Harington, who is already in Constantinople, shall assume the function of Allied Commander-in-Chief at once without prejudice to his two years' tenure of command and shall make arrangements with the French and Italian Military Representatives at Constantinople for the issue of a suitable order to the Allied troops in Constantinople announcing his assumption of command with the full authority of the three Governments concerned.

(8) The practical execution of the military clauses of the Treaty shall be left to the military representatives of the three Powers at Constantinople on lines already discussed in London after full consideration of the recommendations contained in the report adopted by the Allied Military Commission at Versailles.

(9) With regard to the political considerations involved in the distribution of the gendarmerie to be organised and officered by officers of the three countries, the French and Italian Governments will provide the necessary officers for the gendarmerie allotted to the French and Italian zones under the Tripartite Agreement.¹ The remainder of Anatolia shall be under international control and the Military Commission shall decide as to its division into territorial areas in which shall be employed gendarmerie organised by officers of the three countries.

(10) The above arrangements shall be communicated to the Japanese Government by the French, Italian and British Governments.

3. A similar despatch has been sent to Rome.²

I am, &c.,
(for the Secretary of State)
D. G. OSBORNE

¹ Sec No. 118, n. 2.

² No. 1153 of Dec. 31, not printed.

Sir H. Rumbold (Constantinople) to Earl Curzon (Received January 7, 1921)

No. 1708 [E 346/1/44]

CONSTANTINOPLE, *December 31, 1920*

My Lord,

The close of the year finds the Turkish Government in a more difficult situation than ever.

2. It now seems practically certain that the mission to Mustapha Kemal has failed, the Nationalists having adopted an unyielding attitude. There are persistent rumours that the Mission is on its way back, but beyond the fact that it has failed it is unlikely that the Turkish Government will be willing to give detailed information as to what passed at Angora. Matters have, therefore, politically speaking reached a deadlock.

3. The financial situation has gone from bad to worse. A large proportion of the officials have only received 75% of their salaries for October, and nothing either for November or December. At the present moment the three High Commissioners are engaged in a struggle with the Turkish Government regarding the question of effective control over the Turkish finances, this control being bound up with the disposal of any sum which may be advanced by the Banks on the stocks belonging to the Ottoman Government, including the £T.252,000 in gold, the release of which our respective Governments have authorised.¹

4. In reply to the Note which the three High Commissioners addressed to the Grand Vizier on the 17th December,² the Turkish Government have sent us a long Note explaining their view of the nature of the control which they are willing should be exercised by the provisional Financial Commission, and putting forward certain proposals in this connection.³

5. I have had two long interviews, separately and alone, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Finance on this question, and I have pointed out the flaw in the Turkish proposals. These, as formulated, would enable the Minister of Finance to continue the system of paying a percentage of their salaries to all Government employees impartially, whereas, having regard to the insufficiency of the receipts to meet the monthly expenditure, the provisional Financial Commission is insisting, in the interests of law and order and of the proper collection of the Customs revenues, on the necessity of making payments in order of their importance. The provisional Financial Commission holds, and is supported in that view by the three High Commissioners, that services such as the police, customs, prisons and hospitals should constitute a first charge on the revenues. It is admitted that this system operates with great hardship on the employees of the other administrations. But there is no help for it, and, given the crisis, the three High Com-

¹ See No. 199.

² Cf. No. 192, para. 1.

³ This Turkish note of Dec. 30 was forwarded to the Foreign Office under cover of Constantinople despatch No. 63 of Jan. 16 of 1921 and was received on Jan. 28. It is not printed.

missioners are driven to have recourse to expedients. At the present moment it has not been found possible to reconcile the views of the Finance Minister who, with his colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs, is fighting this question, with the view held by the High Commissioners. In the meanwhile the Turkish Government are living mainly on the receipts from the Vilayet of Constantinople and on the Customs receipts, which show signs of falling off owing to the fact that the fall in the value of the lira has acted as a check on importation of articles of luxury. It may be that financial distress will eventually drive the Turkish Government to agree to the form of control on which we are insisting, and even to ratify the treaty. This remains to be seen.

6. An interesting point of my conversations with both the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Finance was the attempt of these two Ministers to enlist my sympathies on their side by agreeing that the police should be paid regularly. This proposal was, in reality, equivalent to a bribe, and I rejected it as I pointed out that other administrations were almost, if not quite, as important to the State as the police. I informed the two Ministers, in short, that, speaking for myself, I would only raise the embargo on the £T.252,000 in gold if, and when, the provisional Financial Commission expressed themselves as satisfied that they had obtained effective control over the Turkish finances. There the matter rests for the moment, pending the examination by the provisional Financial Commission of the latest proposals of the Turkish Government. The controversy over this matter may last for some little time.

7. In the meantime the struggle with the Turkish Government over this question of control is really invested with a political character. It has become evident for some time past that the Turkish Government are pursuing a policy of passive resistance and are almost arrogant. I have had to take up two cases which savoured of political persecution, but I have not troubled your Lordship with these cases. It will be sufficient to say that one of the cases concerned Mustapha Pasha, who, as president of the Court Martial which had been set up by the late Government to try Turks who have committed atrocities during the war, had incurred the enmity of the Nationalists and their sympathisers. No sooner had the present Government come into office than they arrested Mustapha Pasha and his three colleagues on a technical charge of contravening judicial procedure in one particular instance. In reality there was every reason to believe that their prosecution was due to motives of revenge. I am hopeful of settling this and the other case in a manner satisfactory to this High Commission. But the attitude of the Turkish Government in these two cases, as well as their attitude in the matter of the control of the Turkish finances, indicate an attempt to see how far they can go in resisting our demands.

8. The general outlook is very obscure and unsatisfactory.

I have, &c.,

HORACE RUMBOLD

High Commissioner

CHAPTER II

Arabia, Syria, and Palestine February 12, 1920—January 7, 1921

No. 207

*Col. Sir A. Wilson¹ (Baghdad) to Mr. Montagu²
(Received February 13, 4.45 p.m.)³*

No. 1866 Telegraphic [E 235/9/44]

BAGHDAD, *February 12, 1920*

Your telegram dated 5th February.⁴ My instructions to Political Agent, Bahrein,⁵ in regard to his meeting with Bin Saud⁶ were to following effect, dated 24th January:—

‘You should communicate informally on following subjects to Bin Saud.

‘Firstly. His subsidy. Question of reduction is under consideration of His Majesty’s Government. Subsidy of King Hussein⁷ has been greatly reduced.

‘Present arrangement, whereby half is in gold and half in notes, is the best I can do, and is, I hope, satisfactory to him.

‘Secondly. Nejd Mission⁸ has reached Bombay and is due at Bahrein early February.

‘Thirdly. Syria. Arab Government are in control at Damascus and Aleppo. Arab Volunteers have been in active conflict with French troops recently, and anti-French (? conspiracy) (? and in) consequence, anti-foreign (? sentiment) is increasing.

‘Fourthly. Mesopotamia. All quiet.

‘Fifthly. (? Turkey.) The Peace Conference has as yet come to no decision, and I am without information as to probable date of conclusion of peace. It seems fairly certain that steps will be taken to deprive Turkey of the control of the Straits, but they may possibly be allowed to retain sovereignty in Constantinople itself: this, however, is uncertain.

‘Sixthly. Regarding his relations with Hedjaz. King Hussein has recently

¹ H.M. Acting Civil Commissioner and Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, March 1918 to Oct. 1920.

² Secretary of State for India.

³ A copy of this telegram was sent to the Foreign Office by the India Office on Feb. 17.

⁴ Not printed.

⁵ Major H. R. P. Dickson.

⁶ Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the Wahabi ruler of Nejd.

⁷ The Sherifian ruler of the Hedjaz.

⁸ i.e. a mission representing the Emir Ibn Saud which had been in England Oct.–Dec. 1919.

offered to meet Bin Saud at Jeddah, and endeavour to come to a friendly arrangement with him.⁹ Please do not inform him officially of this pending orders of His Majesty's Government, but sound him, if he raises objections to the question, as to whether he would be willing to meet King Hussein at Jeddah under British auspices.

'Lastly. If Bin Saud informs you of an attempt to raise *Jehad*¹⁰ against us in Turkey and Arabia generally, reply that we are generally aware of intrigues on foot to this end. But we do not, as at present advised, attach great weight to them. We rely confidently upon the good sense of leading Arab Chiefs, and of the Arabs at large, to realise that we are working with a single mind for common good, and that nothing but misery can result from a relaxation of our control of affairs in the Middle East.

'If he asks for money and arms. Reply as regards arms, that I regard it as improbable His Majesty's Government will consent to despatch of any arms or ammunition to him.'

Repeated to Cairo.

⁹ Cf. Vol. IV, No. 414.

¹⁰ A 'holy' war of Muslims against unbelievers.

No. 208

Col. Sir A. Wilson (Baghdad) to Mr. Montagu

(Received February 13, 7 p.m.)¹

No. 1867 Telegraphic [E 235/9/44]

BAGHDAD, February 12, 1920

My immediately preceding telegram.²

Your telegram dated 6th February.³ Bin Saud.

Nejd Mission arrived at Bahrein 7th February.

Political Agent, Bahrein, reached Hasa 1st February. Bin Saud arrived 4th February and after exchange of official visits had (? confidential) interview with Political Agent on 5th February with following result.

(1) He claimed very earnestly and with some warmth that we were making his position most difficult by lack of support.

(2) He complained (? that our) apparent support of claims of King Hussain to Syria had aroused much resentment in Nejd.

(3) With regard to proposed meeting with Shereef, Bin Saud anticipated reference by Political Agent to question by announcing that he had heard from Mecca that efforts were being made to arrange such a meeting and that for various practical and other reasons it was quite impossible that meeting should take place anywhere in Hedjaz territory.

(4) It appears, as I rather expected, that chief reason for his visit to Hasa is question of possible *jihad* directed against us from Syria. On this subject Bin Saud made following statement.

¹ A copy of this telegram was sent to the Foreign Office by the India Office on Feb. 17.

² No. 207.

³ Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

He had received information from Mecca that Shereef had decided to utilise Syria *jihad* movement in order to reinstate himself in eyes of Moslem world, and at the same time to discredit Bin Saud. Shereef had sent emissary to Syria with instructions as follows.

Firstly, that *jihad* should be proclaimed in Syria in first place; in the event of the people of Syria being reluctant to act, aid of Turks should be invoked.

Secondly, invitation should be sent from Syria to Bin Sand [*sic*] to lead *jihad* movement in his capacity as avowed champion of Islam.

Thirdly, on the declaration of *jihad*, action to be directed in first place against French in Syria and then against Mesopotamia; it was hoped that Bin Saud would co-operate against Mesopotamia.

Bin Saud said that it was obvious that Shereef (who would take no overt part in above movement until it was definitely successful) anticipated that Bin Saud would be placed by above manœuvre on horns of a dilemma, viz. :—

If he joined movement he would thereby alienate British support.

If he held aloof, the people of Nejd, to whom strong appeal would be made, would turn against him.

Bin Saud earnestly urged as vital necessity that following action be taken at once to restore confidence and to prove to people of Nejd that he had not trusted Great Britain in vain.

Firstly, His Majesty's Government to guarantee at once in writing the maintenance of existing *status quo* on frontier.

Secondly, His Majesty's Government to guarantee at once in writing that Shereef would refrain from aggressive policy.

Thirdly, Mecca and Medina pilgrimage to be opened to people of Nejd, and safety of Nejd pilgrims whilst in Hedjaz to be assured.

Bin Saud expressed himself as positive, and undertook to guarantee that if His Majesty's Government could see their way to give above undertakings, peace of Arabia, so far as he was concerned, was assured, and neither incitements to *jihad* nor Syrian intrigues would have slightest effect on his people. He has up to date not referred to question of money or arms.

Above is purport of message from Hofuf, dated 6th February, received 11th February.

My views follow.⁴

⁴ In his following telegram of the same date (not printed) the Civil Commissioner said that as regards Ibn Saud's requests he found it 'most difficult to make recommendations'. He regarded Ibn Saud 'as by far the strongest man in Arabia at present' and as able 'to maintain his position and authority whether or not we assist'. The only solution he could see was one he had already put forward on Aug. 7, 1918, namely, 'that Bin Saud be informed in writing that Article 2 of the Treaty of 26th December 1915, applies equally to aggression by King Hussein'. In the Treaty thus referred to H.M.G. had recognized Ibn Saud as the independent ruler of Nejd and its dependencies. By Article 2, H.M.G. was, in the event of aggression by any foreign power against the territories of Ibn Saud, to aid Ibn Saud at its discretion if it had not had a previous opportunity of intervening diplomatically. For the text of this treaty see Aitchison, vol. xi, pp. 206–8.

*Colonel Meinertzhagen¹ (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received February 19, 9.30 p.m.)*

No. EA 2994 Telegraphic [E 329/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, February 19, 1920, 6.50 p.m.

1. British Liaison Officer has arrived from Damas[c]us with a letter to Lord Allenby² from Feisal³ and following message which Feisal requests may be transmitted to Foreign Office. Begins:—

Any decision incompatible with Arab aspirations concerning Syria Palestine or Mesopotamia taken without Feisal's presence will not be acknowledged by Arabs and will cause great difficulties in the future for which nation declines all responsibility. Ends.

2. Letter to Lord Allenby says political situation in Damascus is very difficult for Feisal (? and he) asks for statement of policy of Great Britain as regards Palestine and Mesopotamia so that he may make an announcement to people before returning to Peace Conference. Lord Allenby replying that he can add nothing to advice given to Feisal in London.⁴

3. Liaison Officer reports that Feisal is doing all he can to keep country quiet but is rapidly losing power and control in face of extremist party. Feisal is being pressed for definite statement of policy before returning to Paris for Peace Conference.

4. Urge that any reassuring statement as regards policy of British and French Governments towards Arab aspirations may be sent to Feisal at once if possible, to enable him to reassure public opinion in Damascus. Otherwise fear that extremist party will gain complete control in Syria with resultant outbreak of xenophobia [*sic*] and anarchy. Lord Milner⁵ who has been consulted by Lord Allenby recommends this course.

¹ Lt.-Col. R. Meinertzhagen, Chief Political Officer with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

² Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby, H.M. High Commissioner for Egypt.

³ The Emir Feisal, third son of Hussein, King of the Hedjaz, had returned to Syria from London and Paris in Jan. 1920.

⁴ Copies of the letter to Lord Allenby and of his reply were received in the Foreign Office on March 15 as enclosures in despatch No. I/18149/S of Feb. 23 from Col. Meinertzhagen. For the advice given to the Emir in London see, e.g., Vol. IV, No. 330 and No. 331, n. 4.

⁵ Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was in Egypt as the head of a special mission which had left England in Nov. 1919 to enquire into disorders in Egypt and to suggest a form of constitution.

No. 210

Colonel Meinertzhagen (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received February 20, 11 p.m.)

No. 2 Telegraphic [E 392/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, February 20, 1920, 1.25 p.m.

Following from Herbert Samuel¹ for Prime Minister (Begins)

Am more than ever convinced, after visiting various districts and conferring with Administration, of vital importance for future of Palestine of Northern and Eastern Boundaries proposed in despatch 181 of November 17th by Meinertzhagen.²

¹ Mr. Herbert Samuel had been invited to undertake a mission to Palestine to report on 'financial and administrative conditions there, and to advise concerning the line of policy to be followed in the future in these respects, should the mandate fall to Great Britain'. For his account of this mission, see Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* (London, 1945), pp. 148-50.

² Vol. IV, No. 366.

No. 211

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 156 Telegraphic [E 329/2/44]

Private. Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 22, 1920, 9 p.m.

I am discussing the points raised in Colonel Meinertzhagen's telegram No. EA. 2994 (of 19th February)¹ with the French representatives here² with a view to the possible issue of a reassuring statement though neither they nor I feel confident as to the expediency of yet another declaration.

In any case I see no objection to your informing Feisal privately that his message has reached me and that I fully understand and sympathize with his difficulties for which we are doing our best to find a solution.

¹ No. 209.

² French representatives were at this time in London attending the First Inter-Allied Conference of London (Feb. 12-April 10, 1920), for which see Vol. VII.

No. 212

Colonel Meinertzhagen (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 3, 12.50 p.m.)

No. 15 Telegraphic [E 920/920/44]

CAIRO, March 2, 1920, 7.50 p.m.

Demonstrations organised by the Moslem Christian League took place at Jerusalem and other centres in Palestine on February 27th. They passed off quietly. Their object was to protest against Zionism and to demand unity of Syria. Mention was made of complete independence.

These demonstrations though taking advantage of presence of Mr. Samuel

in Palestine undoubtedly owe their origin to French instigation and guidance. I have satisfied myself from documentary evidence that French propaganda has greatly increased in Palestine during last two months and is now working actively against Zionism and for a French Palestine in a unified Syria. Evidence is naturally based on agents' reports solely, but it is frequently confirmed by facts and is of such growing volume that one is compelled to credit it. The French representative at Jerusalem appears to be the source of the propaganda in Palestine and is spending much money to attain his object. Some months ago, at our request, French activity in Palestine ceased and it is only since General Gouraud's arrival¹ and Feisal's return that recrudescence has been noted. Changed conditions make it difficult for us to approach the French on the subject. You will realize how easy it is in Palestine to conduct a very dangerous propaganda and how easy it will be to wreck at its outset our administration and policy of His Majesty's Government. I am of opinion that the French aim at nothing less and if you could make a strong protest to French Government before more harm is done, it will be of great assistance to our Palestine Administration and will put a stop to what amounts to most dishonourable conduct on the part of an Ally.²

The Chief Administrator concurs in above.³

¹ General Gouraud, appointed French High Commissioner in Syria and Lebanon and Commander-in-Chief Army of the Levant in Oct. 1919, had arrived in Beirut on Nov. 19.

² For Lord Curzon's note of March 5 to M. Cambon see No. 13 above.

³ The foregoing telegram is referred to (as a despatch) by Col. Meinertzhagen in his *Middle East Diary 1917-1956* (London, 1959), p. 70.

No. 213

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 3, 9.15 a.m.)

No. 197 Telegraphic [E 887/9/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, March 2, 1920, 7.55 p.m.

Your telegram No. 151.¹

Telegram 1867 from Political, Bagdad,² only reached me last night.

I have had no previous intimation of charges brought forward by Bin Saud.

People of Syria have little sympathy with Hussein and relations between him and Feisal are at present rather strained so it is unlikely that King is at the head of any *Jehad* movement in Syria.

At the same time he is undoubtedly on trial in the eyes of many Arab Moslems and when partition of Syria is announced he will probably feel himself bound, as originator of negotiations with us, to repudiate it and identify himself with Syrian Nationalists. Whether he will do so by resignation or actual participation remains to be seen.

It is obvious, however, that Syrian Arab Extremists are more and more

¹ Of Feb. 20, not printed.

² No. 208.

inclined to link themselves with Turks and Bolsheviks and will do so unless they are given a measure of independence which will satisfy their ideals.

King's telegram to Feisal published in the Press³ to the effect that he will repudiate any agreement made by Feisal which does not safeguard Arab independence and his reported despatch of arms and money to Syria shows the way he is trending. At the same time his previous loyalty inclines me to believe that he will take no other action unless forced by circumstances and that he still hopes for a solution which will render possible maintenance of his friendship with Great Britain.

Repeated to Baghdad.

³ The reference is probably to a telegram of Jan. 16 from King Hussein to his son, the Emir Zeid, instructing him to inform the Emir Feisal that he would not accept any terms that would in any way encroach upon the complete independence of the country. The major part of this telegram was subsequently published in the Damascus and Egyptian press.

No. 214

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 7, 6 p.m.)

No. EA 3004 Telegraphic [E 1087/2/44]

CAIRO, March 7, 1920, 3.10 p.m.

My liaison officer reports that the political situation in Damascus is now acute. Feisal finds himself forced to convoke the Syrian Congress which intends:

- (1) To declare the complete independence of the country.
- (2) To demand that the promises of independence made by the Peace Conference (? be) ratified.
- (3) To crown Feisal as King. Feisal considers that the Congress will serve as a vent for the great excitement (? exist)ing in the country and that he may possibly be able to maintain peace.

In the event of his either refusing to convoke Congress, or refusing to accept the Crown, he considers that he will be disowned by the people and that immediate hostilities will commence both against the British and the French.

Congress was to have met on March 6th but he has managed to postpone it until the 10th or 11th and he urgently requests to know what line the British Government wish him to take. Intense excitement exists in (? Damascus) and preliminaries for a (? great) demonstration in Syria and Palestine are believed being arranged on the convocation of Congress. My liaison officer has seen Feisal and cautioned him against any action unauthorised by the Allied Government[s] but I fear that Feisal is powerless to resist the National feeling. I have informed General Gouroud [*sic*] of situation as I learned it and that I am communicating with you.

Repeated Britforce Constantinople, and General, Bagdad.

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 200 Telegraphic [E 1087/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 8, 1920, 9.15 p.m.*

The position recounted in your telegram No. E.A. 3004¹ has been discussed this afternoon by the representatives of the French and British Governments assembled at the Peace Conference in London.² Since it is reported that a Syrian Congress is about to meet at Damascus, the two Governments, although they are not parties to this proposal, and have not been consulted with regard to it, feel constrained to give the Amir Feisal the following advice:—

The Peace Treaty with Turkey is at this moment being discussed at the Conference in London; and the question of Syria will shortly be examined, with a view to arriving at a settlement which shall be in accord with the declarations that have been exchanged between the British and French and Arab Governments, and shall promote the future good government and peace of those regions.

It has always been contemplated that the Amir Feisal would desire to be heard by the Peace Conference before any final decision was reached: and it is clear that this could not be concluded without such consultation with him.

The Supreme Council will be very glad to hear the Amir Feisal, at the Conference whether it be sitting at Paris or London; and they invite him to attend for this purpose with as little delay as possible.

In these circumstances the two Governments express a strong hope that the Congress, if it is actually held, will take no step that would prejudice the settlement of the matter by the Peace Conference. Neither of the two Governments desires a conflict: and they must impress upon the Amir the consideration that a grave responsibility will rest upon him and the future of Syria may be seriously compromised, if any irresponsible action is taken by the Congress that would place the case of the Syrian people in opposition to the friendly and liberal intentions to which the British and French Governments have given repeated expression.

¹ No. 214.

² The only reference to this meeting which has been traced in Foreign Office archives is in a minute by Lord Curzon, dated March 8. It reads as follows: 'We met today (i.e. the French and myself) and I drafted a telegram for despatch to Lord Allenby [i.e. his telegram No. 200 above]—to be repeated to their representative. . . .'

No. 216

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 9, 6 a.m.)

No. 224 Telegraphic [E 1166/2/44]

CAIRO, March 8, 1920¹

Situation at Damascus.

Following from Chief Administrator O.E.T.A.² South numbered P.O.199 dated March 8th.

Begins.

Suggest that situation would be calmed if it was permitted to Feisal to announce at Congress that Powers accepted him as representative of Arab State including British provinces of Mesopotamia and Palestine and French provinces of Lebanon and littoral. Remainder of Arab provinces under direct control of Feisal but for which he can claim European advisers. If French will accept this it will satisfy pride and national spirit of Syrians whilst both we and French would retain actual control of our present zones.

This will simplify Zionist problem as Feisal understands situation and will not oppose national home, as long as his overlord and . . .³ Syria is recognized.

Will you authorize me to send message to Feisal that you are working for this solution and that he must control situation pending agreement between Powers to such a settlement?

Lord Milner to whom I have shown this entirely agrees.

¹ The time of despatch is not recorded.

² i.e. Occupied Enemy Territories Administration.

³ The text is here uncertain.

No. 217

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 9, 6 a.m.)

No. 225 Telegraphic [E 1167/2/44]

CAIRO, March 8, 1920¹

My immediately preceding telegram.²

I have replied to Administrator as follows:

'I am generally in agreement with your suggestion but I cannot send Feisal message you suggest without authority from Foreign Office to whom I am repeating your telegram'.

Any such action on my part would be taken by Arabs as a recognition by Great Britain of their claims and would certainly embroil us with French.³

¹ The time of despatch is not recorded.

² No. 216.

³ Lord Curzon minuted: 'Do nothing. C.'

No. 218

Letter from the French Ambassador to Earl Curzon

[E 1461/2/44]

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE À LONDRES, 11 mars 1920

Cher Lord Curzon,

Monsieur Millerand¹ m'adresse la copie d'un télégramme de notre Haut Commissaire à Constantinople d'accord avec ses collègues anglais et italien sur les conséquences de la présentation au Gouvernement ottoman d'un traité aussi dur que celui que nous préparons.² Monsieur Millerand pense que les observations de nos Hauts Commissaires devraient faire l'objet d'une discussion approfondie du Conseil Suprême et il estime qu'il est impossible de passer outre aux avis unanimes des trois Hauts Commissaires alliés.

Par un autre télégramme, Monsieur Millerand me fait savoir que l'Emir Feysal vient d'annoncer au Général Gouraud que le Congrès syrien s'apprêtait à proclamer l'indépendance du pays et l'avènement de l'Emir au Trône de Syrie.

Nos deux Gouvernements ont déjà exprimé à l'Emir Feysal leur sentiment contraire à l'attitude qu'il se prépare à prendre.³ Monsieur Millerand est d'avis que cette attitude peut avoir des conséquences fâcheuses et que la décision du Gouvernement Syrien risque de produire ses répercussions aussi bien à Constantinople que dans le reste du monde musulman.

Il croit donc nécessaire que nos deux Gouvernements envoient d'urgence à l'Emir Feysal un nouveau télégramme lui déclarant que la proclamation du Congrès syrien serait considérée par la France et l'Angleterre comme nulle et n'ayant aucune valeur internationale. Ce télégramme pourrait comme le précédent être adressé à l'Emir au nom des deux Gouvernements par l'intermédiaire du Maréchal Allenby.

Conformément aux instructions de Monsieur Millerand, je me propose de saisir le Conseil Suprême de ces questions dans sa prochaine séance.

Votre sincèrement dévoué

PAUL CAMBON

¹ See No. 13, n. 1.

² See No. 19, n. 2.

³ See No. 215.

No. 219

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon

(Received March 13, 11.15 p.m.)

No. 260 Telegraphic [E 1538/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, March 13, 1920, 5.50 p.m.

I have received copy of a . . .¹ from Feisal, addressed to me and other High Commissioners dated March 8th informing me that on that day the Syrian Congress was declaring the independence of Syria and placing him on the throne.

¹ The text is here uncertain.

He assures His Majesty's Government that (? neither) proclamation of (? independence) nor his own advent to the throne of Syria will change the friendly relations between Syria and Great Britain and he assures His Majesty's Government of his friendship.

A short report from my lia[i]son officer in Damascus (? confirms) this. He refused to be present at (? Damascus) (? at) the congress though the French lia[i]son officer did attend.

Subsequently my lia[i]son officer saw Feisal who stated that there was no intimation of hostility to British or French but that the declaration of Congress was merely a statement of the (? will) of the people and a request to the Peace Conference to fulfil its promises.²

Situation in Damascus is (? quiet) but there is apparently not a whole-hearted support for Feisal, the Druce [Druses] and the Orthodox Greek[s] are said to be holding aloof from him at present.

Repeated to Constantinople and General Baghdad.

² For an Italian text of the declaration see Rossi, *Documenti*, No. 35.

No. 220

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 223 Telegraphic [E 1461/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 13, 1920, 6 p.m.*

You should inform Amir Feisal at once that H.M. Government cannot recognize right of Damascus Congress, of whose composition or authority they know nothing, to settle future of Syria, Palestine, Mosul, or Mesopotamia. These countries were conquered from the Turks by the Allied Armies, and their future, which is now before the Peace Conference, can only be determined by the Allied Powers acting in concert.

We do not know if Amir Feisal received our joint warning to him sent on March 8th to the above effect,¹ or whether action of Damascus Congress is taken in ignorance or in defiance of this warning.

In any case, H.M. Government cannot recognize the right of a self-constituted body at Damascus to regulate these matters, and H.M. Government, together with the French Government, are compelled to say that they regard these proceedings as null and void.

You should add, on behalf of H.M. Government, that the right of any body at Damascus to decide the future of Mesopotamia or Mosul is one that cannot be admitted in any circumstances.

You should renew the invitation to Amir Feisal to return to Europe to place his case before the Peace Conference.

¹ No. 215.

*Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby¹ (Paris)**No. 901 [E 1595/2/44]*²*FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 13, 1920*

My Lord,

The French Ambassador called upon me this morning, with reference to the news that had come from Syria as to the proclamation of the Emir Feisal as King of Syria by a Congress assembled two or three days ago at Damascus.

As soon as information had reached us a few days ago of the impending assemblage and probable action of this Congress, the French Government, represented by M. Berthelot,³ and I had discussed the matter and had sent an agreed telegram to Lord Allenby⁴ urging the Emir Feisal to take no action that might compromise the proper settlement of the question, which was in the hands of the Conference now sitting in London, and inviting him to return to Europe to state his case before the only tribunal by whom the future of those territories could be determined.

It now appeared that this communication from us either was too late or had been ignored.

M. Cambon read to me a telegram from General Gouraud describing an interview with the Emir, in which the latter had warned him that the Congress had decided to meet. Speaking from recollection, I think the message went further and intimated that it had already been held; one result being the proclamation of the Emir as King of Syria.

Our own information was more precise. I informed the French Ambassador that we had heard yesterday evening that this self-constituted Congress, of the composition, authority, or credentials of which we knew nothing, had been held; had nominated the Emir Feisal, not only as King of Syria, but as King of Syria, Palestine and Mosul,⁵ and, further, that it had also appointed his brother, the Emir Abdullah, King of Mesopotamia.⁶

These operations, we agreed, were an unwarranted and intolerable exercise of authority by this unknown body in Damascus, and they compelled the French and British Governments to act in complete unison, as they had hitherto done, to repudiate the intentions of the Congress, and to reaffirm

¹ H.M. Ambassador at Paris.

² Throughout this volume an asterisk after the file number denotes that the document has been printed from Confidential Print, see Preface, pp. vii-viii.

³ Secretary-General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁴ See No. 215 and n. 2.

⁵ The source of this information relating to Mosul has not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

⁶ The reference appears to be to telegram EA 3016 of March 12 from G.H.Q. Egypt to the War Office (not printed) which read: 'Feisul was crowned King of Syria and Palestine on March 8th whilst Emir Abdulla was proclaimed King of Mesopotamia. . . .' For an Italian text of the proclamation of the Iraqi Congress at Damascus see Rossi, *Documenti*, No. 36. Cf. No. 230 below.

the position that the future of those territories could be determined only by the Allied Powers now assembled in London, in whose hands lay the construction of the Peace Treaty with Turkey and the settlement of the future of the areas belonging to the old Turkish Empire, which it had been decided to sever therefrom.

The Ambassador, who had received instructions from M. Millerand, was anxious that a further identical telegram should go out from the British Government to Lord Allenby, and from his own Government to General Gouraud, indicating that we were united in the matter; that we declined to recognise the authority of the Damascus Congress; that we regarded its proceedings as null and void; and that we could not allow the settlement to be taken out of our hands.⁷

I said that, for my part, I was quite willing to send such a telegram, and I read to the Ambassador, and handed to him, a form of words which he readily accepted, and which it was agreed that I should send out in the course of the day to Lord Allenby, indicating the point of view and intentions of His Majesty's Government.⁸

M. Cambon, for his part, undertook to telegraph this draft to M. Millerand at once, and he assured me that M. Millerand would, in the course of the day, send identical, or at any rate analogous, instructions to General Gouraud, the text of which he would communicate to me.⁹

So far, therefore, as our immediate action was concerned, the two Governments were in complete agreement, and no point of immediate importance remained to be discussed between us.

On the other hand, I said to the Ambassador that, while I thought it vital that we should stand together, and that there should be no shred of discord between us, I felt bound to take advantage of the opportunity to point out to him that the present situation had arisen, not from any action on the part of the British Government, but solely, so far as I could see, from the proceedings of the French Government and their officials. I reminded him that, over and over again during the past six months, he had come to me and made protests—as I alleged, and indeed had demonstrated, without any sufficient foundation—concerning the supposed intrigues of British officers and of the British in general against the interests of the French in Syria; and he had repeatedly urged that the French should be allowed to take charge of Cilicia and Syria, where they not only had traditional interests of great importance, but where they would be warmly welcomed by the people. Over and over again I had informed him that this confident prediction on his part did not tally with the facts as they had been reported to me; that, on the contrary, I had every reason to believe that the French were regarded with no sort of favour by the peoples of the territories concerned; and that their appearance on the scene, so far from producing peace or harmony, would result in grave disturbances. The Ambassador had consistently disputed the validity of these warnings. Only a few days before, at a meeting

⁷ Cf. No. 218.

⁸ No. 220.

⁹ Handed to Lord Curzon by M. Cambon on March 15, not printed.

of the Allied Conference, M. Berthelot had assured me that the Emir Feisal had gone back to Syria with a signed agreement with the French Government, to which they were convinced that he would be loyal and to which he had pledged himself to secure the adhesion of his countrymen. I had replied that our information was quite to the contrary, and that, so far from an agreement having been concluded which the Emir had pledged himself to carry out, he had merely accepted an agreement subject to submission to his countrymen, and had never attempted to commit the latter to its acceptance.¹⁰ M. Berthelot had entirely disputed my account of what had passed, had treated the matter as settled between the French and the Emir, and had indeed presented to us for consideration the form of French mandate for Syria to which he believed the Emir to have agreed, and which should be the basis of discussion between ourselves with regard to the future, both of Syria and of Mesopotamia. Now, I said, the truth of my prophecies and the small foundation for the French confidence had become apparent. As long as the British were in occupation of Cilicia and Syria no trouble had occurred; nor did I believe that, had they remained in occupation, recent events would have happened. In deference, however, to the insistent pressure of the French Government, we had in November last evacuated both Cilicia and Syria, not without warning the French Government of the serious results that might ensue if they attempted to extend their military occupation of the latter.

What had happened? In Cilicia there had occurred the lamentable events at Marash, by which had been placed in jeopardy not only the position of the French in Cilicia, but the entire fortunes of the Allies in the Middle East.¹¹ In Syria General Gouraud had persisted in disregarding the warnings we had given him about any occupation of the Bekaa, and he had created a sense of irritation in the Syrian people which had culminated in the incidents we were now discussing. Thus the future of France and Great Britain in those parts of the world was imperilled because of the way in which the French Government, in pursuance of traditional or historical aspirations, had insisted on forcing themselves into areas where the French were not welcomed by the inhabitants.

I explained to M. Cambon that I did not make these statements with any idea of uttering reproaches against the French Government, who had evidently been misinformed; but, inasmuch as by their action we had now been driven into a situation which compromised us both, I felt it necessary to place on record that the responsibility was not ours, but belonged in the main, if not exclusively, to the French. These considerations would not, I said, deter me from acting loyally and steadily in accord with them, as far as possible, to redeem the situation. But at least I wished to make it clear that the present position had been brought about by a course of action which we had foreseen, but which, owing to the pressure placed upon us by the French Government, we had been powerless to resist.

¹⁰ For discussion of this agreement at the First Inter-Allied Conference of London see Vol. VII, No. 12, minute 1 (pp. 103-7), and No. 13, minute 3. See also Vol. IV, Nos. 411-12, 416, and 421.

¹¹ Cf. No. 2, n. 2.

The Ambassador listened in silence to these remarks, and did not attempt to dispute a single one of my propositions. Indeed, I cannot help thinking, from the tenour of his previous conversations with me, that he recognised their essential truth.

Upon the main facts of the case we agreed, as I have said, to reaffirm our contention that the fate of Syria could not be determined by an irresponsible body in Damascus, but could be settled only by the Peace Conference in London or Paris; and we decided to repeat the invitation, which had appeared in my earlier telegram, to the Emir Feisal to come and state his case before the Conference in Paris.

I added that there was one special feature in the proceedings of the Damascus Congress which concerned the British Government even more than it did the French. It was that the Emir in addition to the inclusion of Palestine in the area of Syria over which he had been proclaimed King, appeared actually to have incorporated Mosul as well, while it seemed that his brother Abdullah had simultaneously been proclaimed King of Mesopotamia. His Majesty's Government could not possibly allow the fate of these regions to be determined in such a manner. Indeed, what a Congress of Syrians, of whatever element it was composed, could have to say to Mosul or Mesopotamia it was difficult to imagine. I therefore proposed, in the telegram which I was about to send and of which I gave a copy to the Ambassador, to add a special reservation on our part with regard to those regions.

M. Cambon did not dissent from any of my observations, and we parted with a common affirmation of the intentions to which I have already referred.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

No. 222

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 15, 9.50 a.m.)

No. EA 3023 Telegraphic [E 1599/2/44]

Clear the line

CAIRO, March 14, 1920, 8 p.m.

Have received Despatch from Feisal's Ministry for Foreign Affairs addressed to Your Lordship announcing that Arab people, in view of delay in realizing their natural aspirations and fulfilment of promises of Allied Powers, fearing for their national unity and their future existence, had decided to proclaim absolute independence of Syria in her three zones and to place upon her throne the Emir Feisal.

2. Programme of new Government is (1) to maintain independence, (2) to assure public order, justice, religious freedom, rights of minority, and economic interest of friendly Powers, (3) maintain good relations between Syria and Foreign Powers especially England and France whose economic interests in country and traditional friendship are recognized, (4) to reorganize

and develop country and its resources, (5) to cooperate loyally with Allies in maintaining peace throughout East.

Despatch ends with expression of friendship and desire for friendly co-operation.

[3.] Further announcement will be sent by letter, addressed to my liaison officer for transmission to Your Lordship, setting out in name of Feisal the reasons for action taken.

These reasons though in greater length are as outlined above.

Letter concludes as follows:— 'I sincerely hope that in answer to this letter you will announce recognition of principle of independence and United¹ Syria which will allow me to come at once to Europe to thank His Majesty's Government and to enlighten Supreme Council as to conditions existing in this country.

'I affirm also that Syrian people are always ready to come to an agreement with British and French Governments on matters relating to safeguarding of their interests in Syria, Palestine and Irak.'

4. I have also received a statement of policy, made by Syrian Congress in reply to a speech made by Feisal, in which the following sentences occurred, 'We undertake to respect friends² of our Allies as well as their foreign interests and we trust that Allies will agree to our (? proposals)³ and [with]draw their forces from Western and Northern zone[s] as security and order will be maintained by our national troops.

'We offer thanks and appreciation due to our brothers in Mesopotamia⁴ for their services which they rendered to Arab movement.

'We insist on demanding complete independence for their country so . . .⁵ political or economic frontiers will exist between Syria and Mesopotamia which we . . .⁶ support its independence with all our force'.

5. Despatches and letters from which foregoing are abstracted follow by next bag.⁷

¹ The original letter here read: 'la reconnaissance du principe de l'Indépendance et de l'Unité de la Syrie'.

² In the text of this statement received later (see n. 7 below) this word read: 'friendship'.

³ The text received later read: 'our independence'.

⁴ The text received later read: 'appreciation to all brothers of Mesopotamia for the services which'.

⁵ The text is here uncertain. The text received later read: 'so that no'.

⁶ The text is here uncertain. The text received later read: 'which we too support'; in the Foreign Office it was suggested that the passage should read: 'Mesopotamia if we too support'.

⁷ They were sent under cover of despatch No. 33 of March 16 (not printed) received March 29. In a minute Lord Curzon enjoined: 'No reply. C 15/3.'

No. 223

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 18, 11.30 p.m.)

No. 271 *Telegraphic* [E 1813/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, March 18, 1920¹

I am told that Feisal will be crowned on 20th instant. This will commit him irretrievably to policy of an independent and undivided Syria. If Powers persist in their attitude of declaring null and void the action of Feisal and Syrian Congress, I feel certain that war must ensue. If hostilities arise, the Arabs will regard both French and English as their enemies and we shall be dragged by the French into a war which is against our own interests and for which we are ill-prepared. I strongly advise that Powers acknowledge sovereignty of Feisal over an Arab nation or Confederation embracing Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, the Administration of Syria being secured to French and that of Palestine and Mesopotamia to British. This arrangement would I think be accepted by Feisal, and Arabs would be our friends and I cannot see how we could be losers by it. An early decision is essential. Under present circumstances it is unlikely that Feisal will accept invitation to Europe and in fact his influence is the only restraining factor in Syria now.

¹ The hour of despatch is not recorded.

No. 224

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 251 *Telegraphic* [E 1813/2/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 19, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 271 (March 18th).¹

We think there must be some misunderstanding about position, since last thing we contemplate is war with Feisal or a military campaign in Syria and North West Arabia. This is wholly opposed to our policy and we should decline either to entertain it on our own account or to be dragged into it by the French.

Facts as so far known to us are as follows:—

When we first heard of impending Congress from you we issued warning in our No. 200² coupled with invitation to Feisal to come to Europe and state his case.

We then heard from General Headquarters, Egypt No. 3016³ on March 8th Feisal was crowned King of Syria and Palestine (from another quarter we heard of Mosul also)⁴ whilst Abdulla was proclaimed King of Mesopotamia, and that Powers occupying Syria and Palestine were disowned. You

¹ No. 223.

³ Of March 12. See No. 221, n. 6.

² No. 215.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, n. 5.

also told us on March 13th (No. 260) that apparently there was not whole-hearted support for Feisal at Damascus.⁵

Our information as to Damascus Congress is that it was self-constituted body without representative character or authority, while we are not aware of any representatives from Mesopotamia having been present other than small body presumably of Bagdadi Syrians who are stated in 'Times' of March 16th⁶ to have been in Damascus but not to have taken part in Conference. In these circumstances while we have no objection to Feisal being declared King of Syria by a properly constituted Syrian authority, and while we would willingly recognise him as such ourselves, we could not regard decision of Congress as superseding duties and decisions of Peace Conference now sitting in London, or as entitling Feisal to force our hands.

You now advocate acknowledgment of sovereignty of Feisal over Arab nation or confederation embracing Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia, the administration of Syria being secured to the French, and that of Palestine and Mesopotamia to the British.

We are not quite clear what this means.

As at present proposed Palestine and Mesopotamia are being severed from the Turkish Empire by the Peace Treaty now being drawn up and which Turkey will be compelled to sign; and mandates placing their administration in the hands of Great Britain under the League of Nations are being prepared.

Syria will be similarly treated with the French as Mandatories. Do you propose that this machinery which has been applied to every other mandated territory should be dispensed with here, that Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia should be regarded as already assigned, without Treaty sanction, to Feisal, and that we should accept a mandate from him? How would this procedure be applied to Palestine and how would recognition of Feisal as King be reconcilable with Zionist claims?

Further as regards Mesopotamia, when we consulted representative people in all parts of that country in 1918-1919 as to a Shereefian ruler with Abdulla in our minds, they pronounced by a large majority against either. How then is it proposed now to make either Abdulla or Feisal their King, and what reason is there to suppose that they want him? These questions are put, not in order to suggest difficulties, but elucidate position. Distribution of late Turkish Empire is being pursued here by recognised methods, and is quite compatible with full recognition of Feisal's sovereignty and Arab independence. But attempt to prejudge the decision of the Peace Conference by premature action may be as unfortunate in Asia as it has already proved to be in Europe, and sets a dangerous example.

We think that these considerations will be as readily appreciated by Feisal as they are by ourselves, and that, if explained to him, they will lead to amicable settlement of matter.

We shall be grateful for your considered opinion on all these points.

⁵ No. 219.

⁶ p. 16, col. 5.

No. 225

Colonel Meinertzhagen (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 20, 10.55 a.m.)

No. 33 Telegraphic [E 1902/2/44]

Urgent

CAIRO, March 19, 1920, 11 p.m.

British liaison officer, Damascus, reports March 15th all quiet. Feisal has received your 223 of March 13th addressed to Lord Allenby.¹ He behaved calmly and reasserted his great friendship for Great Britain against whom he intended to take no action. His action was merely intended to hasten settlement of Syria and he had no intention of dictating to Peace Conference. His action would, he hoped, help England as he wished England to help the Arabs. He is not publishing your 223 as it might excite extremists. He is willing to return to Peace Conference after he has satisfied his people that satisfactory solution is imminent. British liaison officer also reports that Druses are still holding aloof hoping for separate settlement under British. The Druses asked for definite statement from British regarding their future. Feisal has advised . . . Zeid² not to have anything to do with Mesopotamian party. Nuri Said³ has returned to France on private affairs.

¹ No. 220.

² In Cairo telegram No. 031/18 of March 18 (not printed) it had been reported that the Emir Zeid might proceed to Deir-el-Zor 'to organise disturbances in Mesopotamia'.

³ General Nuri Said, future Prime Minister of Iraq, was at this time Chief Aide-de-Camp to the Emir Feisal.

No. 226

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 21, 12 noon)

No. 273 Telegraphic [E 1927/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, March 20, 1920, 11.45 p.m.

Your telegram No. 251.¹

I fully understand you (? contemplate) no military action in Syria or North West Arabia, but I would impress on you that if Peace Conference persists in regarding as null and void the action taken by Feisal and Syrian Congress it is almost certain that Feisal will be forced by public opinion to commence hostilities.

Facts are, so far as I am aware, much as you have (? learnt) (? them) all but though there has been some wavering on the part of Druses and orthodox church and (? following) Damascus Congress represents vast majority of Syrian feeling.

If you can assure Feisal that Peace Conference

(a) recognizes him as representative of Arab peoples of Syria and Palestine and will deal with him as such at Peace Conference.

¹ No. 224.

(b) recognition of [*sic*]² rights of Arab peoples of these countries to unite under one suzerainty provided the special claims of Great Britain in Palestine and Mesopotamia and of France in Syria and Lebanon are recognized, and claims of Zionists to a home for Jews in Palestine are admitted, I believe Feisal will accept such a decision.

Further the right of Mesopotamia to form part of a confederated Arab State, if it so wishes, should be recognized.

I do not think above proposals in any way interfere with the machinery of Peace Conference or are at variance with its intentions as expressed by you. Nor does action on lines I have suggested amount to acceptance of a mandate from (*sic*)³ Feisal.

² The text should presumably read: 'recognizes rights. . . '.

³ Thus in original.

No. 227

*Col. Sir A. Wilson (Baghdad) to Mr. Montagu
(Received March 22, 10 a.m.)*¹

No. 3600 Telegraphic [E 2060/2/44]

BAGHDAD, March 21, 1920²

My immediately preceding telegram.³ Reference High Commissioner's telegram, dated 1st⁴ March, No. 271, to Foreign Office. Fact that Abdulla appears to have been declared King of Mesopotamia simultaneously with declaration of Faisal as King of Syria, &c., seems to indicate that even in Syria it is recognised that Mesopotamia is entitled to its own Government.

Unless we regard ourselves as pledged by our commitment(s) of 1915 to King Husain⁵ to regard Mesopotamia as an integral part of any Arab kingdom which may be set up in Syria, I submit that we should make it clear that the Anglo-French declaration of 8th [*sic*] November⁶ binds us to set up in conformity with the wishes of the people of Mesopotamia an indigenous Government independent of that of Syria. There is no community of feeling whatever between Syria and Mesopotamia and the people of this country are as little likely as those of Nejd to accept a Government inaugurated in Syria and dominated by Syrian politicians.

So far from making the Arabs on this side our friends, recognition of Faisal as King of Mesopotamia can only be regarded in this country as a betrayal of its interests and we shall alienate the best elements here.

A committee under the presidency of Sir Edgar Bonham-Carter⁷ is now

¹ A copy of this telegram was sent by the India Office to the Foreign Office, where it was received on March 24.

² The time of despatch is not recorded.

³ Of March 20, not printed.

⁴ Amended in the Foreign Office to '18th'; see No. 223.

⁵ The reference is to the correspondence between Sir H. McMahon and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca, July 1915-March 1916, printed in Cmd. 5957 of 1939.

⁶ An English translation of the text of this declaration issued on Nov. 7, 1918, is printed in 145 *H.C. Deb. 5 s.*, col. 36 (July 25, 1921).

⁷ Judicial Secretary in the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia.

engaged in preparing a scheme on the lines outlined in my immediately preceding telegram, and on hearing from Government that my proposals are generally approved I shall be . . .⁸ public announcement which should be an effective counterblast so far as this country is concerned to any announcement that Faisal may make regarding this country.

Repeated to Delhi, Cairo and Teheran.

⁸ The text is here uncertain.

No. 228

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 264 Telegraphic [E 1927/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 22, 1920, 8 p.m.

Your telegram No. 273.¹

Peace Conference have taken no decision about Feisal and Syrian Congress, since they have no information as to character or authority of this Congress.

All that has happened is that British and French Governments have so far declined to recognise validity of a decision which affected to settle future of Syria, Palestine, Mosul, and Mesopotamia behind their backs.

You express a hope that Peace Conference will recognise Feisal as representative of Arab peoples of Syria and Palestine, and will deal with him as such. There should be no difficulty in this, provided that Feisal comes to Peace Conference with corresponding recognition of special positions of France in Syria and Lebanon and British in Palestine, the latter including obligation to provide a national home for Zionists in that country.

But in the next paragraph you speak of general Arab suzerainty over a much wider area, including Mesopotamia. We do not know what Feisal has to do with Mesopotamia. Arab interest in Mesopotamia is primarily that of Arab inhabitants, and our willingness to give full scope to their desires follows from our engagements with King Hussein and our declaration of November 1918.² But it has no connection with Feisal or a Damascus Congress.

Points of divergence appear to be by no means insuperable, and, if Feisal comes to Peace Conference on above understanding, we do not think it ought to be difficult to arrive at a satisfactory settlement.

¹ No. 226.

² See No. 227, n. 6.

No. 229

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon

(Received March 24, 9.15 a.m.)

No. 282 Telegraphic [C 2068/2/44]

Clear the line

CAIRO, March 23, 1920, 11.20 p.m.

1. Am I to understand from your telegram No. 264¹ that I am now authorized to invite Faisal to attend Peace Conference on the understanding

¹ No. 228.

that he is recognized by it as chosen representative of Arab peoples of Syria and Palestine provided he agrees to recognize special positions of France in Syria and Lebanon and of British in Palestine including provision of a national home for Jews in latter country?

2. I doubt very much if Faisal will accept such a . . .² unless informed at the same time that Peace Conference will recognize in Peace Treaty with Turkey the principle of unity of Syria and Palestine under one Suzerainty as recommended in my telegram No. 273.³

3. Should Faisal accept invitation as outlined in first paragraph of this telegram without addition recommended in second paragraph, he will find it difficult to persuade his people that a satisfactory solution is imminent and his absence from Damascus would then be a danger as extremists would assume control.

4. I think in any case it should be left to Faisal to send plenipotentiary to Peace Conference instead of going himself should he consider his own absence from Damascus would be dangerous.

5. I would again emphasise danger of refusing to recognize action taken by Syrian Congress as expressing will of the majority in Syria.

6. I recognize that Faisal has no claim to control of Mesopotamia and I have nothing in this sense to add to penultimate paragraph of my telegram No. 273.

Repeated to Baghdad.

² The text is here uncertain.

³ No. 226.

No. 230

Colonel Meinertzhagen (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 27, 6.35 p.m.)

No. Pol. 1607 Telegraphic [E 2329/2/44]

Clear the line

CAIRO, March 26, 1920, 5.15 p.m.

Proclamation dated March 8th issued by Le Congrès Général of Irakiens is now to hand. After reciting various historical and treaty claims in support of their views they proclaim the independence of the Arab countries of Irak and Mesopotamia¹ from the North of Mosul villayet [*sic*] to Persian Gulf with political and economic union with an independent Syria. Abdulla is proclaimed King of Irak with Zeid Regent. Our military occupation of Mesopotamia is declared to be [at] an end.

In a personal letter from Feisal to Lord Allenby dated March 20th former states that Syrian Congress did not decide the future of Mosul and Mesopotamia. This was done (? by) Mesopotamians which [*sic*] were in Damascus. In conclusion Feisal says that his Government would be very glad to open negotiations with His Majesty's Government with a view to a satisfactory settlement. 'I expect your reply before I can . . .² to invitation to Europe for solution of this problem in such a form as to preserve rights of all interested.'

¹ Cf. No. 221, n. 6. The Italian text here read: 'l'indipendenza del territorio irāqeno'.

² The text is here uncertain.

(? No) reply will be sent to Feisal till your reply to Allen(bys?) (? 282) of March 23rd³ is received.

Repeated to Civil Commissioner Bagdad.

³ No. 229.

No. 231

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received March 30, 12.20 p.m.)

No. 298 Telegraphic [E 2491/2/44]

CAIRO, March 27, 1920¹

My telegram No. 282.²

King Hussein has wired me on the subject of Syrian independence. He emphasizes the principle of Arab Unity. He is indifferent whether people owe allegiance to him or he to them. He quotes verbatim, as defining the policy of Great Britain, that part of McMahon's letter of August 30th 1915 which confirms Lord Kitchener's m[e]ssage concerning the independence of Arabia and Caliphate.³

He states he supports resolutions of Syrian and Mesopotamian Congress which are in accordance with declarations of Peace Conference and appeals to us 'not to support the opinions of those who hate our interests which are bound up with yours' (reference of course to the French). He finishes by declaring that Arabs who responded to our call in the war are still our friends.

Vickery⁴ reports Abdullah has received many telegrams of congratulation and that local excitement prevails, majority of inhabitants being averse from any aggrandizement of Sherifian family.

King has begun to sign himself Grand King of the Arabs.

Repeated to Baghdad.

¹ The time of despatch is not recorded.

² No. 229.

³ Cmd. 5957 of 1939, No. 2. The relevant passage of this letter was as follows: '... we confirm to you the terms of Lord Kitchener's message . . . in which was stated clearly our desire for the independence of Arabia and its inhabitants, together with our approval of the Arab Khalifate when it should be proclaimed. We declare once more that His Majesty's Government would welcome the resumption of the Khalifate by an Arab of true race. With regard to the questions of limits and boundaries, it would appear to be premature to consume our time in discussing such details in the heat of war. . . .'

⁴ Lt.-Col. C. E. Vickery, H.M. Agent at Jeddah.

No. 232

Record by Earl Curzon of a conversation with the French Ambassador on the Syrian Question.

[E 2522/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 30, 1920

In the course of a conversation this morning with the French Ambassador, I made to him the following suggestions as to a possible line of policy to be

pursued by the two Governments in combination, with regard to the difficult position that has arisen in Syria.

(1) Feisal should be again informed that it is essential that his position should be regularised by the only body that is competent to do so, viz.: the Peace Conference.

(2) The Conference will meet again in San Remo on or about April 19.

(3) Feisal is invited to attend. If he cannot do so in person, it is essential that he should depute some one of real authority to act for him. Nuri Said does not possess the requisite authority or character, and has shown himself to be a politician holding extreme views. It is very desirable that Feisal should send one of his brothers, Abdulla (who recently talked of visiting Cairo) or another.

(4) Should Feisal or one of his brothers attend the Peace Conference, the French and British Governments will be prepared to recognise Feisal as King of Syria on certain conditions.

(5) The first of these conditions is that his election is validated by a constitutional procedure, demonstrating that he is the chosen representative of the peoples of Syria, and not merely of an unauthorised body, possessing no legal position or power.

(6) The second condition is that he will be prepared to make separate arrangements (as we understand him to be willing to do) with the French Government about Syria and the Lebanon, and with the British Government about Palestine.

It will be for the French Government to secure, if they are so disposed, the autonomy of the Lebanon, and to make such arrangements with Feisal as both may agree to concerning French advisers in Syria.

It will be for the British Government to secure the fulfilment of the pledges they have entered into with the Jews in Palestine—pledges which have been already recognised by Feisal.

The manner in which these arrangements can in either case be adjusted to the recognition of Feisal's position as King of Syria is one of the subjects that can only be settled by personal intercourse.

(7) It is not proposed, as suggested in Lord Allenby's telegram of March 23,¹ to provide in the Peace Treaty with Turkey for the future administration of Syria or Palestine. The Peace Treaty will confine itself to severing them from the Turkish Empire. Their future administration has nothing to do with Turkey, and will be determined by agreement between the Powers concerned.

(8) Owing to the difficulty of formulating identical mandates for the various countries concerned, and the impossibility of incorporating any mandate in the Peace Treaty, if this is to be concluded at a very early date, it is proposed that the several arrangements which will be made between the French and British Governments, the Arab authorities or Governments, and the Zionist representatives shall be embodied in documents which will be submitted to the League of Nations.

¹ No. 229.

(9) Feisal has been granted a subsidy of £100,000 *per mensem*, equally divided between the French and British Governments, up till the end of December last. It is believed that no payment has yet been made in 1920.

While it is not desired to deprive Feisal of any arrears of subsidy, it is obvious that they cannot be paid to one who is engaged either in fighting the forces of one of his paymasters, or in pursuing an unfriendly and independent policy.

Should the Peace Conference arrive at a satisfactory solution of these difficulties with Feisal, the French and British Governments will be prepared to pay the arrears of the subsidy from January 1920 until such date as the new arrangements come into force.

No. 233

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 292 Telegraphic [E 2491/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 1, 1920, 12.20 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 298 (of 27th March.¹ King Hussein).

You should inform Hussein and Abdullah without delay that His Majesty's Government do not regard the 29 Mesopotamians of Damascus² as having any authority to speak for Mesopotamia, and that the future of that country can only be decided by the Peace Conference after ascertaining the wishes of the inhabitants.

¹ No. 231.

² Cf. No. 230.

No. 234

Memorandum by the French Ambassador¹

[E 2522/2/44]

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE À LONDRES, *1 avril 1920*

Les suggestions de Lord Curzon, au sujet de la régularisation de la situation de l'Émir Faysal,² appellent de la part de Monsieur Millerand les observations suivantes:

1°— Il ne s'agit pas 'de régulariser' la situation de l'Émir Faysal, car les Gouvernements français et britannique considèrent comme inexistant l'acte du Congrès de Damas. La Conférence de la Paix, après la conclusion du Traité de Paix avec la Turquie, doit pouvoir, en toute liberté, se prononcer sur la reconnaissance du régime qui sera établi dans ces régions dans des conditions donnant toutes garanties en ce qui concerne le libre choix des populations.

¹ This memorandum may have been handed to Lord Curzon during an interview on April 1 when M. Cambon called on him 'in order to discuss the Syrian question'; see Vol. IX, No. 245. No record of their conversation on this subject has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

² Recorded in No. 232.

2°— Pas d'objections.

3°— L'Émir Faysal doit se rendre personnellement à la Conférence où il s'est déjà présenté comme porte-parole d'une grande partie des populations syriennes. La venue de l'Émir Abdalah, proclamé Roi de la Mésopotamie à Damas et actuellement Ministre des Affaires Étrangères du Hedjaz, créerait une ambiguïté dangereuse. L'Émir Zeid, seul des autres frères de Feysal connu en Syrie, est un jeune homme sans autorité. Au surplus, la Conférence n'entend pas recevoir un représentant du Souverain que serait Feysal, mais Feysal lui-même comme représentant des populations syriennes.

4°— Les Gouvernements français et britannique ne sont pas disposés à reconnaître dès maintenant Feysal comme Roi, même sous certaines conditions, mais si avant de quitter la Syrie, il lui est indispensable pour le maintien de l'ordre de donner des assurances aux populations, ils sont disposés à renouveler les déclarations publiques qu'ils ont faites antérieurement au sujet de l'indépendance [et] du libre développement des aspirations nationales. (Notamment Déclaration du 8 Novembre 1918).³

5°— Avant d'examiner la validation de l'élection de Feysal suivant une procédure régulière et constitutionnelle, il importe que la Conférence définisse les limites et le statut des régions comprises sous le nom de Syrie. Il appartiendra ensuite aux Puissances intéressées de déterminer les liens plus ou moins étroits qui uniront les différentes populations qui s'y trouvent établies.

6°— Pas d'objections étant entendu, en ce qui concerne le Liban, que Feysal se bornera à admettre une rectification de limites et se désintéressera de l'organisation intérieure de cette région. Quant à la Palestine, qui devait être soumise à un régime international, la France doit participer aux arrangements à faire avec Feysal ou s'entendre préalablement avec l'Angleterre.

7°— D'accord.

8°— D'accord.

9°— Dans les premiers jours du mois de Mars, le Général Gouraud a fait verser à l'Émir la part incombant au Gouvernement français dans la subvention accordée par les deux Gouvernements pour l'administration de la zone Est. Le subside a donc été versé en ce qui concerne la France jusqu'au 29 Février. Ce point étant précisé, le Gouvernement français n'a pas d'objection à la suggestion de Lord Curzon relative au versement de la subvention.⁴

³ See No. 227, n. 6.

⁴ In a minute of April 1 Major Young (see No. 250, n. 1) wrote that he understood 'that the S. of S. suggested to M. Cambon that this note should be withdrawn'.

Letter from Mr. Samuel to Earl Curzon¹

[E 3109/131/44]

*Private and personal*ON BOARD S.S. 'HELONAN', April 2, 1920²

Dear Lord Curzon,

After two months in Palestine, I have now concluded my visit there. I received a fortnight ago from the Emir Feisal, whom I had met several times in London, a friendly invitation to go on to Damascus and to stay with him. On personal grounds I should have been glad to accept it, but at the present juncture I thought it inexpedient.

I have written a short report, addressed to Lord Allenby, on the administrative and financial matters relating to Palestine, on which he had invited me to advise. No doubt he will forward a copy to the Foreign Office.³ I have left with General Bols, the Chief Administrator, memoranda in greater detail on several specific points. This letter gives a summary of the conclusions I have formed on the political situation in Palestine, particularly with reference to the declarations of the Syrian Congress at Damascus on March 8th in favour of an independent and united Syria, to include Palestine, under the kingship of Faisal.

The movement in Palestine for its union with Syria springs from several sources.

There is a natural patriotic sentiment among the small class of politically-conscious Arabs in favour of an independent Arabia, which should be as extensive and as important as possible.

There is a feeling that to insert economic divisions between neighbouring countries, which have hitherto been under a single government, would cause much inconvenience and would be a retrograde step. Commerce and travel between Palestine, the Hauran and Syria have hitherto been untrammelled by frontiers, and there is a resistance to the economic inconveniences that would be likely to follow from political separation.

There is an anti-Zionist movement, based largely upon the anticipation that a large Jewish immigration would lead to the reduction of the rest of the population to a lower status. A united and independent Syria is regarded as the only means of combating Zionism.

There is the personal interest of the effendi class in Palestine which expects that the administrative posts under an independent government would be filled by its own members, to a far greater degree than under a British mandate, particularly if it were combined with a Zionist policy.

¹ This letter was enclosed in a letter, dated April 3, from Mr. H. Samuel to the Private Secretary, Foreign Office, received April 13. The gist of it had already been telegraphed to Lord Curzon by Col. Meinertzhagen, on behalf of Mr. H. Samuel, in Cairo telegram No. 40 of March 27, not printed. The letter is referred to in Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs*, pp. 149-50.

² Mr. Samuel had left Alexandria on April 1.

³ A copy of this report (not printed) was enclosed in Mr. Samuel's letter to the Private Secretary, see n. 1 above.

There is also a social question in Palestine, the fellaheen and the effendis being in antagonism to one another. The latter fear the consequences of any government which they did not control being in a position to exact social legislation.

All these motives combine to foster the movement. It is certain, nevertheless, that it is not deep-seated. The mass of the population is not concerned with any question of general politics. Moreover, the fellaheen view with suspicion any movement which is organized by the effendis, simply for the reason that it is so organized. As to anti-Zionism, the most hopeful feature in the situation lies in the fact that there is no antipathy, and remarkably little friction, between the Jewish agricultural colonies, founded in considerable numbers during the last thirty or forty years in many parts of the country, and their Arab neighbours. On the contrary, their relations, as a rule, are excellent. The Arab villagers know that they have been able to improve their methods of cultivation owing to the object-lessons furnished by the Jewish colonies. They know that there is more employment in the districts where those colonies have been founded, and that they themselves are in better circumstances than the Arabs in other districts that have been left undeveloped. When I was in Northern Galilee, a number of the sheikhs came in from the villages to tell me that they lived on the best of terms with the Jewish population, and that they disassociated themselves from the anti-Zionist meetings that had recently taken place in the towns. It is indeed only in the towns that the movement exists, and there the numbers that have attended the meetings have not, as a rule, been considerable. There is no evidence of anything in the nature of a widespread and formidable national movement against Zionism. The declarations of the Syrian Congress are said to have disturbed the Christian elements which had combined with Moslems to oppose Zionism. The Christians of Palestine would not at all welcome the prospect of being the subjects of an independent Moslem King, and it is reported that the unity of the Christian and Moslem Society is being impaired as the result of the policy announced at Damascus.

The Administration at Jerusalem took an alarmist view of the probable results of the Syrian Congress and the coronation of Faisal. Those events had been preceded by the collection of quantities of food-stuffs at Damascus, by the enrolment of bodies of soldiers, by aggressive action by Mustapha Kemal against the French forces in Cilicia,⁴ and by the holding of anti-Zionist meetings in Jerusalem and Jaffa. They were immediately followed by reports being received in Jerusalem that the Arab army had taken the field and had occupied Latakia and strategic points commanding the Lebanon. The officers of the Administration accept, for the most part, the Zionist policy because it has been adopted by His Majesty's Government, whose servants they are, and not with any conviction of the wisdom of that policy. They had regarded rather more seriously than they deserved the anti-Zionist manifestations which had taken place. The view was held that there was an immediate prospect of grave trouble; military precautionary

⁴ See, e.g., Vol. IV, No. 423, and Vol. VII, No. 36, minute 1.

measures were adopted; the immediate recognition, under certain conditions, of Faisal as King of a united Syria was advised; failing that, large reinforcements of troops were asked for.

I feel convinced that no-one would have been more surprised than Faisal himself and his chief supporters had he been recognized by the Powers, no matter under what conditions, as King of Palestine—unless indeed it were [the] population of Palestine itself. Such a prospect has not yet, I believe, been regarded by them as within the bounds of serious consideration. Faisal, I am told, has never even set foot in Palestine. It is universally known, and not denied, by the Arab Nationalist leaders that the Syrian Congress was quite unrepresentative of the populations both of Palestine and of Mesopotamia.

Nevertheless, it would, I am convinced, be neither just nor politic to ignore the claims of the Arabs and to oppose a mere negative to their demands.

On the supporters of Zionism lies the duty to allay apprehension by not being over-eager in the execution of their policy, and by offering to the Moslem and Christian inhabitants of Palestine opportunities of participating in their enterprises. In the course of a statement on the economic condition of Palestine, which I have sent to the local press, I have tried to remove misunderstandings as to what the proposals of Zionism, in relation to the rest of the population, really are.⁵

But it is obvious that Zionist moderation and Zionist explanations are not enough. Although the attitude of the Administration a few weeks ago has been proved by experience to have been unduly alarmist, it is very probable that a merely negative attitude on the part of the Peace Conference would be met before long by some kind of armed action on the part of the Arabs. Their resources are small and their forces are weak, but it is none the less an obvious duty to take all reasonable measures to avoid the possibility of a conflict.

Besides, there is substance in part, at least, of the arguments that are advanced for a united Syria. It cannot be denied that the establishment of customs and other barriers between the various parts of Syria would cause inconvenience to its inhabitants and would be detrimental to its prosperity. It is true that it would be wrong to create an Arab state without access to the sea. It is true that Arab patriotic sentiment, to such extent as it exists, ought to be respected and, so far as possible, satisfied.

But to meet these contentions by the recognition of Faisal as King of Palestine appears to me to be both objectionable and unnecessary. To combine such recognition as has been suggested with the maintenance of a completely British control over the administration would be found, I believe, to be impracticable. If not at first, certainly in a few years, the Arab Kingship would be used as a means of introducing, in larger and larger degree, Arab administrators into the higher offices of the Government, and

⁵ A copy of this statement (not printed) was also enclosed in the letter to the Private Secretary; see n. 1 above.

of ensuring the adoption of a policy hostile to all non-Arab aspirations. It would be a very powerful lever for those ends.

The moral effect upon Zionism, if not fatal, would be most grave. Jews throughout the world would no longer be willing to devote their energies, their money, their lives, to the development of a country which might ultimately prove to be nothing better than one province among others of an unprogressive Moslem State. They can understand a British administration, under a mandate, responsible to the League of Nations, leading up, in course of time, to a self-governing Commonwealth. They are willing to take the risk that such a Commonwealth, when it comes, would prove to be satisfactory. But a British administration under Arab sovereignty would be a very different thing. At any time the course of events, locally or in Europe, might lead the British to withdraw, leaving the Arab element supreme. Then it would be Turkey over again. Such a solution would give no permanence, no security. It would take the heart out of Zionism. The movement would feel that it had been betrayed.

Is it possible to find a method which would be likely to satisfy what is legitimate in the Arab demands, while avoiding the dangers and disasters which their full acceptance would entail? I believe it is. I think the solution lies in the formation of a loose Confederation of the Arab-speaking states, each of which should be under its own appropriate government, but all of which should be combined together for common and economic purposes. The seat of such a Confederation should be Damascus, and Faisal might be recognised, not only as sovereign in his own State, but also as the Honorary Head of the Confederation.

At the risk of repeating a proposal which may have already been under discussion, and may perhaps have been elaborated by others in fuller detail, I venture to append to this letter the outline of a scheme such as I have in mind. I believe that, if such a plan were approved by the Powers, a firm attitude on their part would secure its acceptance by the Arabs, and so a prospect be offered of an escape from the present *impasse*, with all the risks of conflict which its continuance would involve.⁶

Believe me, &c.,

HERBERT SAMUEL

⁶ Lord Curzon minuted: 'A federal Council at Damascus with the League of Nations behind it fills me with no sort of enthusiasm. C 15/4.'

ENCLOSURE IN NO. 235

Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and the Arabian States

The following proposals are suggested for consideration:—

1. Five States to be constituted, which should form a loose confederation:—
 - (a) Arab Syria, with its capital at Damascus and with Emir Faisal as its sovereign. This State should be completely independent. Its ruler should have the right to select European advisers wherever he wished,

but if the French so desired, both Britain and France might undertake not to allow their nationals to accept such posts.

- (b) Western Syria, administered by France under a mandate and subject to the general supervision of the League of Nations. If the French would consent, the sovereignty of Faisal might be recognized in this area. If not, not.
- (c) Palestine, administered by Great Britain under a mandate and subject to the general supervision of the League of Nations. The boundaries of Palestine to be those proposed by the War Office. The mandate to embody provisions relating to the Jewish National Home, which should be satisfactory to the Zionists. The sovereignty of Faisal would not be recognized in this area.
- (d) The Hedjaz, independent, under the sovereignty of King Hussein, who should be free to choose his European advisers as he wished. If the other South Arabian principalities could be formed into some kind of union with the Hedjaz, that would be desirable. If not, they might constitute separate units in the Confederation or they might be left outside.
- (e) Mesopotamia, under British administration and, if desired, under an Arab sovereign. If it were decided to constitute a more purely British State at Basra and the neighbourhood, such a State might form a sixth unit.

2. To supervise the common affairs of the whole area there should be a permanent Council, under some suitable title, with its seat at Damascus. It should consist of one or more representatives of each of the constituent States. Its chairman should be appointed by the League of Nations. If desired, it might be under the Honorary Presidency of the Emir Faisal.

3. The constituent States should engage not to make war with each other, but otherwise the Union should be principally economic and not political.

- (a) There should be no customs barriers between them, and it should be one of the chief tasks of the Council at Damascus to arrive at an equitable allocation of the customs revenues collected, at a uniform rate, at the ports and frontiers of the Confederation.
- (b) The States not bordering on the sea should have the use of all the ports, on equal terms with the States within whose area those ports were situated.
- (c) The Council should exercise a general supervision over inter-State railway traffic, in order to ensure co-ordination.
- (d) There should be no passport requirements for travellers between one State and another. The Council should supervise the arrangements for extradition between the States.
- (e) The Council should supervise also the measures for quarantine, &c.

4. In the event of the Council not being able to arrive at a settlement of any matter which was in controversy among its members, reference should

be made to the Council of the League of Nations, whose decision should be final.

5. All these arrangements should be subject to review by the League of Nations after a period of years. (It is desirable that the period should not be a short one.)

No. 236

Colonel Meinertzhagen (Cairo) to Earl Curzon (Received April 5, 6 p.m.)

No. 51 Telegraphic [E 2665/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, April 4, 1920, 8.30 p.m.

Following from Feisal to Lord Curzon March 28th. Begins

Mon Lord,

Je vous ai déjà fait part dans mes précédentes dépêches des justes demandes de la nation Syrienne, basées sur des promesses et des déclarations officielles des alliés, et de sa ferme intention de conserver l'amitié existant entre eux et votre grand[e] nation.

Je vous certifie [*sic*] que les Arabes en Syrie et en Mesopotamie, sans distinction de religion, sont d'accord pour demander l'indépendance et l'unité de leur pays, ainsi que de maintenir les liens que la lutte en commune a créé[s] entre eux et les alliés.

Je vous confirme mon intention de répondre à votre invitation de venir en Europe aussitôt que j'aurai reçu de la part du Gouvernement de la Grande Bretagne, des déclarations, si non officielles du moins privées, annonçant la reconnaissance de notre indépendance. Je vous assure que les Arab[e]s qui ont gagné la sympathie de la Grande Bretagne, grâce aux sacrifices consentis par eux pendant la guerre, désirent rester fidèles à cette dernière et sont prêts, en vue de conserver l'amitié existant entre nous et d'assurer l'indépendance qu'ils désirent, à sacrifier, le cas échéant, les plus grands de leurs intérêts.

No. 237

*Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received April 8, 10.10 a.m.)*

No. 335 Telegraphic [E 2839/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, April 7, 1920, 7.30 p.m.

In reply to communication contained in your telegram 292¹ King Hussein has telegraphed stating that he has no relation or connection with Peace Conference. His relations and engagements are, as he has pointed out many times before, solely with Great Britain who called him, made him revolt and accepted (? original) conditions with regard to independence of Arab country and what concerns it, under signature of High Commissioner who was the intermediary for communications on matter, as shown by letters

¹ No. 233.

which were lately seen by Jeddah agent and as confirmed by National Conferences no matter how these conferences are considered by politicians. Trusting in honour and good reputation of Great Britain for keeping her word, King says he risked all for revolt, its dangers calamities and difficulties.

He does not know he has committed any crime in eyes of Great Britain. He also asks for reply about Abdullah's visit.²

In reply I propose saying:—

A. His Majesty's Government cannot accept his statement that all his conditions were accepted or that declaration of Damascus Congress is in strict accordance with promises of His Majesty's Government.

B. His Majesty's Government is aware of promises it made during early negotiations and has every intention of upholding them.

C. He must be patient and accept our assurances that Peace Conference is doing its best to find satisfactory solution.

D. We should like Abdullah to come to Cairo at once.

Unless we are to have serious trouble with King Hussein I regard Abdullah's visit as essential.

Please reply urgently.

² Lord Allenby had for some time been urging the desirability of a visit to Cairo by the Emir Abdullah, who was both one of King Hussein's sons and his Minister for Foreign Affairs.

No. 238

Memorandum by the French Ambassador¹

[E 2831/2/44]

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE À LONDRES, 7 avril, 1920

Monsieur Millerand a fait savoir au Général Gouraud que les propositions de Lord Curzon relatives à la situation en Syrie et en Palestine² tenaient surtout compte des indications données par le Maréchal Allenby. Il l'a prié de lui faire connaître son sentiment sur ces propositions et d'expliquer s'il y a lieu les données fournies par le Maréchal Allenby. Il transmettra à Lord Curzon la réponse du Général Gouraud dès qu'il l'aura reçue.

En attendant, il résulte des informations données par le Haut Commissaire à Beyrouth que l'Emir Feysal ne met à son voyage en France d'autre condition que la reconnaissance de l'indépendance des pays arabes, reconnaissance qui est déjà stipulée dans l'accord provisoire du 6 Janvier dernier.³ Il n'est pas question de le reconnaître immédiatement comme Roi de Syrie. Quant à déterminer les conditions auxquelles pourrait lui être reconnue cette qualité,

¹ Received in the Foreign Office on April 8. A minute on the file reads: 'This is apparently intended to tone down, but not to replace the original reply. . . . H. W. Young 8/4.' Cf. No. 234, n. 4.

² See No. 232.

³ For the text of this agreement see Vol. IV, No. 416, and for the Emir Feisal's view of it see *ibid.*, No. 421.

Monsieur Millerand n'y voit pas d'objections, mais cela n'aurait pas pour le moment d'utilité pratique, puisque les conditions ne pourront être remplies que lorsque le statut définitif extérieur et intérieur de la Syrie aura été établi.

Monsieur Millerand estime que le Gouvernement français pourrait proposer au Général Gouraud de répondre à l'Emir Feysal en ce qui concerne la Syrie par la déclaration suivante qui paraît de nature à donner satisfaction à l'Emir :

'Le Gouvernement français se référant d'une part à ses déclarations précédentes et d'autre part aux principes généraux de la liberté des peuples et de collaboration amicale proclamés par la Conférence de la Paix, confirme sa reconnaissance du droit des populations de langue arabe fixées sur le territoire syrien, de toute confession, à se gouverner elles-mêmes à titre de nation indépendante.

'Il considère que l'histoire lui fait un devoir d'accepter le mandat qui lui serait confié par la Société des Nations de donner à ces populations ses conseils et son aide pour réaliser leurs aspirations légitimes et leur permettre de s'organiser en nation après une longue oppression et au sortir d'une guerre qui a couvert le pays de ruines; il n'a pas d'autre ambition.

'Il garantira leur indépendance contre toute agression dans les frontières que fixera la Conférence de la paix en se plaçant au triple point de vue ethnique linguistique et géographique et en tenant compte de certaines autonomies nécessaires.'

En ce qui concerne la Palestine, il n'est pas dans la pensée de Monsieur Millerand de revenir sur l'arrangement qui a été conclu. Il a simplement voulu faire remarquer qu'en ce qui concerne ce pays qui devait primitivement être soumis à un régime international, la France ne devrait pas être écartée des arrangements à intervenir en ce sens que le Gouvernement britannique ne devrait pas conclure avec l'Emir Feysal avant d'avoir eu une conversation préalable avec le Gouvernement français pour la sauvegarde des intérêts qu'elle possède en Palestine.

No. 239

Colonel Meinertzhagen (Cairo) to Earl Curzon (Received April 10, 3.15 p.m.)

No. 56 Telegraphic [E 3021/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, April 9, 1920, 5.45 p.m.

Your 294 addressed to High Commissioner.¹

Syrian Congress is in theory a body elected by same voters as elected deputies to Ottoman Parliament. Representatives from Palestine were not

¹ Of April 1, not printed. In this Lord Curzon had pointed out that No. 222 made no reference to the Emir Feisal's claim that the Syrian Congress was 'a regular assembly composed of regularly elected delegates, that it has met on several occasions in full view and with knowledge of British Military authorities, and that it was consulted by American Commission' (i.e. the King-Crane Commission which visited Palestine and Syria, June-July 1919; see Vol. IV, Nos. 198, 217, 219, and 224).

elected but invited privately by Feisal to attend, being in some cases former deputies to Ottoman Parliament. Syrian Congress met during British occupation of Syria but had no official dealings with us.

It laid its views before American Commissioner but this is immaterial as Commissioner received any person or body of persons without distinction.

No. 240

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 320 Telegraphic [E 2620/9/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 9, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 303 (of 30th March.¹ Visit of King Hussein to London).

If Abdullah is coming to Cairo do you still propose that Hussein should visit London?

We have to look at matter in double light of its effect

(a) upon Arab and Syrian claims for independence or Kingdoms on widest scale.

(b) upon position of Ibn Saud who will be apt to regard visit of Hussein as a decision against himself.

Possibility of Abdulla visiting London has also occurred to us.

Please telegraph your views.²

¹ Not printed. In this telegram Lord Allenby had inquired whether Lord Curzon intended 'to confirm invitation to visit London which I conveyed to King when I was at Jeddah?' Lord Allenby had visited Jeddah early in January.

² In his telegram No. 383 of April 19 (not printed), Lord Allenby replied that he did not see that 'visit of King need necessarily affect larger Arab question. It might on the other hand be useful to have him at home when terms of Turkish Peace Treaty to which he will probably greatly object are published.

'Abdullah would remain at Mecca in the absence of the King and I do not think that there is any necessity to invite him to England.'

Subsequently, in his telegram No. 443 of May 12 (not printed), Lord Curzon informed Lord Allenby that it was not now proposed to invite King Hussein to London but that a visit by the Emir Abdullah in a private capacity had been suggested by Gen. Nuri Pasha.

No. 241

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 324 Telegraphic [E 2839/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 10, 1920, 11.50 a.m.*

Your telegram No. 335¹ (King Hussein and Syria).

Your proposed reply to King Hussein appears to go rather farther than is actually necessary in present circumstances. I consider that you should return reply on following lines:—

¹ No. 237.

His Majesty's Government were far from expressing hostility to Hussein or Abdullah, latter of whom will be welcomed to Cairo. His Majesty's Government merely questioned the right of the 29 Mesopotamians, or the Damascus Congress, to speak for the people of Mesopotamia.

No. 242

*Lord Hardinge to Earl Curzon (San Remo)*¹

No. 28 Telegraphic [E 3506/85/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 21, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 7 (of April 20th.² Messages from Feisal).

Lord Allenby's No. 359³ was not received until 18th April. It will now have reached you in sections.⁴ I propose to reply as follows to his No. 360.⁵ Begins.

You should ignore Feisal's letter of the 8th April as any reply to it would be tantamount to recognising his right to speak for Palestine. To reply to his letter of the 10th April does not appear open to quite the same objection, as a failure to reply at all might have the effect of inducing him to encourage further disturbances by Moslems in Palestine with the object of forcing us to recognise his connection with that country. You should therefore if you see no objection return a non-committal reply expressing gratification of His Majesty's Government at his desire to assist in the establishment of intimate relations and a good understanding between Moslems, Christians and Jews and adding that His Majesty's Government regard this as the correct attitude for an enlightened ruler to adopt and will remember it if they should in the future have occasion to co-operate with Feisal or to invite his assistance in any questions relating to Palestine.

Ends.⁶

¹ Lord Curzon was attending the Inter-Allied Conference at San Remo which had opened on April 18 (see Vol. VIII, Chap. I). Lord Hardinge was Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office

² Not printed.

³ This telegram of April 14 gave the text of a letter dated April 8 from the Emir Feisal to Lord Allenby, expressing his surprise at the concentration of fresh forces in Palestine ('de nouvelles forces en Palestine') and asking Lord Allenby 'de bien vouloir me renseigner, sur les raisons qui l'ont portée [*sic*] à ordonner cette concentration de troupes'.

⁴ i.e. selections of Foreign Office telegrams sent confidentially to H.M. Representatives abroad.

⁵ This telegram of April 14 (not printed) communicated the text of a further letter, dated April 10, from the Emir Feisal, expressing his displeasure at hearing of the 'ominous riots' in Palestine (anti-Jewish riots had broken out in Jerusalem on April 4), asking for information, and stating his readiness to 'induce both sides of exigency [*sic*] of maintenance of order'.

⁶ No reply to this telegram has been traced in Foreign Office archives nor any evidence of the despatch to Cairo of a telegram worded as suggested above.

No. 243

Earl Curzon (San Remo) to Lord Hardinge (Received April 27, 8.45 a.m.)

No. 38 Telegraphic [E 3810/2/44]

SAN REMO, April 26, 1920, 6.25 p.m.

Sent to Cairo, repeated Foreign Office No. 38.

Questions of the future administration of Syria and Palestine have been discussed and decided by the Peace Conference within the last two days.¹ It was decided to include in Peace Treaty with Turkey Articles recognising Syria and Mesopotamia as independent subject to the assistance of a mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The mandates for Syria and Mesopotamia were subsequently given by a decision of the Supreme Council to France and Great Britain. The terms of the mandates are to be drawn up at a later date by the principal Allied Powers and to be submitted to the Council of the League of Nations for approval. The boundaries of these States will not be included in the Peace Treaty but are also to be determined by the principal Allied Powers. As regards Palestine an Article is also to be inserted in Peace Treaty entrusting administration to a mandatory, whose duties are defined by a verbatim repetition of Mr. Balfour's declaration of November 1917.² Here again the boundaries will not be defined in Peace Treaty but are to be determined at a later date by principal Allied Powers. The mandatory is not mentioned in Treaty, but by an independent decision of Supreme Council was declared to be Great Britain.

To the above extent future of Syria has been resolved by Peace Conference. It remains to be considered how these decisions affect position of Feisal and what is attitude of Peace Conference towards him. In his letter to me of March 28th (*vide* Meinertzhagen's telegram No. 51 of April 4th)³ Feisal announced his willingness to come to Europe as soon as he had received from British Government a declaration, either official or private, announcing recognition of his independence. What exactly this means we do not know and Nuri Pasha has been unable to tell us. It is believed that Feisal has given similar assurance to French. The latter are making an announcement to him through General Gouraud confirming their recognition of right of Arab speaking populations in Syria, of whatever faith, to govern themselves as an independent nation.⁴ This apparently means that they are prepared to recognise him as King of Syria subject to the acceptance of French mandate. We have no objection to giving a similar provisional recognition of his claim to be regarded as Head of an independent Syrian State. But both French and ourselves hold strongly that his claim to Kingship can only be formally established by Peace Conference and by such proofs as latter may require of legitimacy of his claim to be recognised as King of Syria.

¹ See Vol. VIII, No. 15, minute 2; No. 16, minute 1.

² This Declaration relating to 'the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People' is printed in H. W. V. Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, vol. vi (London, 1924), p. 170.

³ No. 236.

⁴ See No. 238.

In this respect his election by Syrian Congress lacked validity of an authentic title. The Peace Conference accordingly holds that Feisal should carry out his promise to come to Europe and state his case to them.⁵ Indeed he was specially invited some weeks ago both by British and French Governments to do so. The next meeting, which it is hoped that he will attend, is to be held at Paris to present Turkish Treaty to Turkish Delegates on or about May 10th. There will further remain to be discussed between him, the French and ourselves, the boundaries of Syria and Palestine; while the terms of the mandate to be conferred upon French for Syria will also have to be settled. As regards Palestine, the conferment of mandate upon Great Britain is not regarded by us as inconsistent with recognition of Feisal as head of an independent Syrian State in as much as he has known throughout that British Government were pledged by Mr. Balfour's declaration to creating a national home for Jews in Palestine and this intention has been acquiesced in by him. But we cannot recognise him as King of Palestine although as mandatories we shall regard ourselves as under an obligation which will be confirmed by terms of mandate to safeguard in fullest manner interests of indigenous inhabitants of the country.

You should use your own judgment as to manner in which this communication should be made to Feisal and as to form in which invitation should be conveyed. We are desirous to give full consideration to difficulties as well as claims of Feisal and we feel that sound way to a friendly and peaceful solution would be his personal appearance in Europe to state his own case.

Question of Mesopotamia does not arise in this context since it is understood that Feisal makes no claim in respect of that country, while, if he had made it, it could not be accepted by us. The future administration of Mesopotamia under mandate of Great Britain will be deterimined [*sic*] in accordance with wishes of its inhabitants whose views are now being taken. What form [of] native administration they will desire and whether it will or will not embrace a demand for a Shereefian King remains to be seen.

⁵ See Vol. VIII, No. 16, minutes 1 and 4.

No. 244

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon (San Remo)

Unnumbered¹ Telegraphic [E 3842/2/44]

CAIRO, April 27, 1920, 11.35 p.m.

My immediately following telegram.² Begins:

Your Highness:—

I am instructed by His Majesty's Government to convey to you following message.

¹ Repeated as No. 418 to the Foreign Office, where it was received on April 28 at 8.30 a.m.

² In this telegram of April 27 (not printed) Lord Allenby had stated that his immediately preceding telegram contained the text of the note he proposed to address to the Emir Feisal. Lord Allenby's action was approved in Foreign Office telegram No. 391 of April 28, not printed.

As a result of recent decisions taken by Allied Powers in Conference at San Remo, provision has been made to recognize Syria and Mesopotamia as independent States, subject to assistance of a mandatory power, until such time as both (? States) (? can) stand alone.

In pursuance of these decisions Mandate for Syria has been entrusted to France, while that for Mesopotamia has been entrusted to Great Britain. Great Britain has also been nominated mandatory power for Palestine.

His Majesty's Government feel very strongly that time has now come to arrive at an arrangement whereby claims of Syrian people can be reconciled with these decisions.

In Your Highness's letter 103.E. of March 28th, addressed to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, you express your willingness to proceed to Europe on condition that independence of Syrian people was recognized.

While, in accordance with decisions now taken, His Majesty's Government are prepared to recognize Your Highness provisionally as head of an independent Syrian State, they hold strongly that your claim to Kingship can only be formally established by peace Conference. They would therefore urge that you should come to Europe without further delay and state your case. There will be a further meeting of Conference in Paris at the end of May and it is hoped that Your Highness may see your way to attend the meeting.

As regards Palestine you have always been aware that His Majesty's Government were pledged to creating a national home for the Jews in Palestine, an intention in which administration acquiesced. His Majesty's Government will regard themselves as under an obligation which will be confirmed by terms of mandate to safeguard in fullest manner the interests of indigenous inhabitants of the country.

In urging upon Your Highness the desirability of responding to the invitation of His Majesty's Government to proceed to Paris without further delay, I desire to impress upon you that His Majesty's Government are solely animated by desirability that full consideration should be given to Your Highness' aspirations and that you should have fullest opportunity for stating your case.

I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to Your Highness the assurance of my high consideration. Ends.

No. 245

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 410 Telegraphic [E 3798/9/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 4, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 395 (of April 22.¹ King Hussein and Ibn Saud).

Following for King Hussein:— begins

His Majesty's Government regard with serious misgiving the possibility of an open rupture between King Hussein and Ibn Saud and consider

¹ Not printed.

themselves bound to avert it by every means in their power. They are convinced that the danger of such a catastrophe will never be removed until a meeting has been arranged between the two. They realise that Ibn Saud is reluctant to meet King Hussein either in the Hejaz or in the Hejaz territorial waters, and do not wish to press him to accept this alternative. At the same time they regard his proposal that King Hussein should meet him at Baghdad or Bombay as impracticable, and they do not propose to make this suggestion to King Hussein. Both rulers are hereby invited by His Majesty's Government to agree to a meeting at Aden or on board one of His Majesty's Ships in Aden Harbour. His Majesty's Government are ready to arrange for this meeting to take place either immediately, or, if climatic conditions and the approach of the pilgrimage season render this impracticable, as soon as possible after the pilgrimage is over. They are also ready to place at the disposal of each of the two rulers any British officer whom either may select to assist him and, if necessary, to represent his own point of view to His Majesty's Government. In addition to this they are prepared to select an impartial official of high standing to arbitrate on such points as may be referred to him by either of the two rulers. In the meanwhile they desire to urge upon both parties the paramount importance of maintaining the existing truce between them over the pilgrimage season. They accordingly invite them to co-operate with each other to this end and to give mutual assurances to His Majesty's Government that the re-opening of the pilgrimage to the people of Nejd shall not be attended with any disturbance. King Hussein is hereby requested by His Majesty's Government to guarantee that the pilgrimage will be re-opened on the understanding that Ibn Saud guarantees that the pilgrims from Nejd will be placed in charge of a responsible official who will undertake to ensure their good behaviour. Ibn Saud is requested to furnish this guarantee on the understanding that King Hussein puts no difficulties in the way of the pilgrimage, and undertakes on his side to restrain his people from any aggression against the Nejd pilgrims. Both rulers are invited to maintain the existing *status quo* until each has returned to his own dominions after the proposed meeting. They are also invited to signify their concurrence in a meeting at Aden under the conditions outlined in this message. In the event of either

- (1) Declining to accept a meeting at Aden
- (2) Declining to preserve the existing *status quo* until after the meeting
- (3) Declining to give the required guarantees of good behaviour on the part of their followers during the pilgrimage,

that ruler cannot reasonably expect a continuance of financial or other support from His Majesty's Government.

An identical message has been sent by His Majesty's Government to Ibn Saud. Ends.

You should communicate above to King Hussein with least possible delay.² India Office are telegraphing in precisely similar terms to Baghdad.

² This message was communicated to King Hussein by Col. Vickery on May 19.

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received May 6, 5.55 p.m.)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 4319/1136/44]

Very urgent. Private and very confidential

CAIRO, May 6, 1920, 3.15 p.m.

Your Private and very confidential telegram of April 29th.¹

I have duly noted that it is proposed to appoint Mr. Herbert Samuel as first head of New Administration in Palestine when Mandate comes into operation, and that my observations are requested on manner in which military should be replaced by Civil Administration as well as effect of impending changes on native population.

As regards transfer of Administration I foresee no difficulties. In present state of country I think it will be found necessary to continue martial law for some time to come, but there is no reason why new Civil Head of Government should not immediately assume control of existing Administrative machinery which has been so designed as to conform at once with peace conditions. Many of the officers at present employed under Military Administration [are] known to be anxious to continue in their posts, and it will probably be found convenient, in view of knowledge they have acquired, to utilize their services either permanently or until such time as Civil Administration is in a position to find adequate substitutes and otherwise develop [sic] Civil Service.

Details as regards transfer can best be discussed with new Governor after his arrival.

As regards effect on native population I think that appointment of a Jew as first Governor will be highly dangerous.

The Mahometan population are already in a state of great excitement owing to news that Mr. Balfour's declaration is to be included in treaty of peace, the only restraining factor being assurance which has been given by Chief Administrator that Government of country would be a British Government. They will regard appointment of a Jew as first Governor, even if he is a British Jew, as handing country over at once to a permanent Zionist Administration.

I anticipate that when news arrives of appointment of Mr. Samuel general movement against Zionists will result, and that we must be prepared for outrages against Jews, murders, raids on Jewish villages, and raids into our territory from East if no wider movement.

The indigenous christian population, protestant, catholic, and Greek Orthodox will also deeply resent transfer of Government to Jewish Authority, and will throw their weight against Administration. They are sufficiently influential to make Government of any kind very difficult.

I hope that these opinions will not be taken as directed in any way against

¹ Not printed.

Mr. Samuel, who is best choice that could be made if it is decided that a Jew should be appointed as first Civil Governor.²

² This telegram from Lord Allenby caused Lord Curzon to ask Mr. Samuel, who had already accepted the appointment, whether he did not think it would be better for someone else to go to Palestine for a year to relieve him 'of the brunt of the difficulties'. For Mr. Samuel's account of this interview with Lord Curzon on May 12, see Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs*, pp. 151-2.

No. 247

Earl Curzon to Sir A. Geddes¹ (Washington)

No. 433 Telegraphic [E 4220/56/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 7, 1920, 5 p.m.

Your telegram No. 313 (of May 4th).²

The salient fact of the oil situation today is that the United States produces nearly seventy per cent of the world's output, and that United States Companies own at least three-fourths of the output of Mexico which is at present 16 per cent of the world's output and is rapidly increasing.

The British Empire's output is about 2½ per cent, or if the production of Persia is included as being owned by a British Company, the total is about 4½ per cent.

From this it will be clear that the United States controls more than 80 per cent of the world's oil supply and dominates the oil position today. United States Oil companies have also secured production or been actively prospecting in Roumania, Turkey, Palestine, China, Borneo, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Cuba, Trinidad, Costa Rica, Peru and Venezuela.

Notwithstanding the enormous predominance thus assured, the United States have taken the lead in endeavouring to prevent other countries acquiring oil concessions in other parts of the world, notably Latin America, and in passing legislation to restrict foreign companies working in the United States. The experience of the war has shown the danger of dependence on foreign supplies and the United States cannot well complain if His Majesty's Government should decide to follow their example.

As regards the Asiatic fields, these may be divided into Burma, the Dutch Indies, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Palestine, of which the first three are producing considerable quantities and the remaining two are prospective only. Burma and the Dutch Indies have been worked for many years by British and Dutch companies, respectively, and are presumably not in question. Persia has, however, been more than once the subject of United States criticism, the suggestion being made that one of the aims of the recent Anglo-Persian treaty³ was to strengthen the British petroleum position. This is, of course, entirely unfounded, our petroleum rights in Persia dating from

¹ H.M. Ambassador at Washington.

² Not printed. This had repeated the request for information on the petroleum position made in No. 57 above.

³ Printed in Cmd. 300 of 1919; cf. Vol. IV, Chap. V.

1901, when they were secured by private British interests just as the Standard Oil Company later obtained extensive rights in China, though these did not prove successful. As regards Mesopotamia and Palestine, all surveys and acquisition of rights have been forbidden while these territories have been in military occupation and no concessions have been granted to any British or other applicant.⁴ The whole question remains to be dealt with by the Governments of these two countries when constituted, and they will presumably consider certain United States claims in Palestine, and British claims in Mesopotamia and Palestine which date from before the war.

⁴ According to a later memorandum by Lord Curzon, dated Dec. 12, 1920 (not printed), a Conference of Ministers had on Jan. 23 decided that 'as a matter of principle the revenues arising from the exploitation of the oil fields of Mesopotamia should accrue to the State, and should not be assigned to joint-stock companies'. At the end of 1920, however, as the memorandum stated, various Government departments were urging that State operation was undesirable in view of the highly speculative and costly nature of the work and that development should be left to private enterprise.

No. 248

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received May 13, 8.45 p.m.)

No. 470 Telegraphic [E 4698/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, May 13, 1920, 2.40 p.m.

My telegram No. 418 of April 27th.¹ Following is text of Faisal's reply just received. Begins:

Your Lordship,

1. It is with great appreciation that I put on record recognition of Conference at San Remo that Syria and Mesopotamia are both independent States. This decision of Conference has been arrived at as all the Arabs believe in accord with desire of independent Syrian nation and in spirit of justice and humanity.

2. Also I put on record with great justness the preparedness of our great Ally, Great Britain, to recognize me as Head of Independent Syrian State.

3. As regards mandate which Your Lordship has mentioned I feel I have no right to discuss it, the people being aware of danger which it may entail upon their future safety and independence, have bitterly protested against it and refuse to accept it.

4. Yet, that does not mean that we are self-contented and are not ready to get necessary help we are in need of by making contracts with our Allies in which our National sovereignty is absolutely safe-guarded. In former letters both I and my Government have stated that we do not refuse such help.

5. As regards question of Palestine I have not noticed in Your Lordship's letter enough clearness to suggest recognition that this country is an insepar-

¹ No. 244 and n. 1.

able part of Syria though Palestine geographically, ethnographically, traditionally, economically and from point of view of language and national desire can in no way be separated from Syria. Moreover there is to be found amongst correspondence between His Majesty Hussein and His Excellency Sir H. MacMahon a letter in name of Great Britain dated October 25th 1915 which recognised Palestine to be within Arab Empire whose limits as therein defined are accepted by British Government.²

6. Moreover these letters, as notes of meeting at 10 Downing Street show,³ are considered to be of equal value as engagement with President of French Republic. Even Sykes-Picot agreement on considering question of Palestine has clearly stated in 3rd Article that in yellow zone an international administration would be established and form of such an administration should be decided on after an agreement of representatives of Sheriff at Mecca.⁴

7. There is nothing to be found in this document concerning Zionists or Jews. Being in need of calming people who are in a most agitated state of mind and spirit, I hope I can get from Great Britain some satisfactory declaration which I can also use in keeping in hearts of Arabs confidence which they have in great Ally and prove to them that any agreement between British and Zionists is in no way to be considered of more value than agreement with King Hussein or President of French Republic.

8. As regards question of my acquiescence to creation of a national home for Jews in Palestine I believe there is some misunderstanding; all that I have admitted is to safeguard rights of Jews in that country as much as rights of indigenous Arab inhabitants are safeguarded and to allow same rights and privileges.

9. Arabs of Palestine both Christian and Mahommedan have repeatedly availed themselves of every opportunity [? to protest] against any agreement or pledge that they would make their Motherland the national home of Israelites. I am ready to come to Europe quickly to state case of my country if only I receive a positive declaration to my agitated people stating that Conference does in no way allow Palestine to be separated from Syria. By such means alone I believe we can come to a solution which would safeguard interests of all concerned. In the meantime I am urgently in need of an answer.

I again wish to assure Your Lordship of my high consideration and esteem.

² In Cmd. 5957 of 1939, No. 4 (translation of a letter from Sir H. McMahon to the Sheriff of Mecca) is dated Oct. 24, 1915. The reference is presumably to the following passage:

'(1) Subject to the above modifications Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sheriff of Mecca.'

³ On Sept. 19, 1919; see Vol. IV, Chap. II, p. 396.

⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 246.

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received May 27)

No. 503 [E 5374/9/44]

CAIRO, May 16, 1920

My Lord,

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that H.H. the Emir Abdullah arrived in Cairo on April 26th and returned to Mecca on May 11th.

He was accompanied by Sherif Faiz, Sheikh Suleiman Qabil, Mayor of Jeddah, Mahmud Pasha Kaisuni, Minister of War, Sheikh Fuad el Khotib and an escort of ten Bedu. Colonel Vickery, C.M.G., D.S.O., British Agent at Jeddah, was also in attendance.

During his visit I took the opportunity to discuss with the Emir various questions which concern the Hejaz, such as the Quarantine, the necessity of effecting sanitary improvements in the main pilgrim centres, the King's relations with Ibn Saud, and other matters of minor importance. In all of these I left him in no doubt as to the policy and wishes of His Majesty's Government and requested him to convey what I had said to his father.

I did not, however, convey to him the substance of Your Lordship's telegram No. 410 containing the joint message to King Husein and Ibn Saud¹ as I considered it better that Colonel Vickery should approach the King personally on his return concerning this matter.

The Emir, in his turn, brought up the whole Arab question and the part which King Husein had played in it and handed me two memoranda of which I attach copies.² He also showed me two telegrams which he had received from the King in which the latter claimed the right of representation at the Peace Conference in matters affecting all the Arab Countries, repudiated the Emir Feisal as his representative, and appointed the Emir Abdullah in his stead.

I refused to enter into the subject matter of the memoranda in detail, pointing out to the Emir that the whole question of the early correspondence had been thoroughly discussed in London last Autumn.³ I also informed him that His Majesty's Government could not recognise the right of the King to speak for countries, such as Syria and Mesopotamia, whose inhabitants had not elected him to be their spokesman, that the whole question had in any case passed from His Majesty's Government into the hands of the Supreme Council and that, as the latter had actually issued its decision as regards Mandates, it only remained for the chosen Mandatory Powers to discuss with the Arab Countries concerned the settlement of such matters as boundaries, administration and control.

¹ No. 245.

² Only one of these memoranda, namely one entitled 'Translation of a statement handed by Emir Abdullah to the High Commissioner in Egypt, Cairo. May 3rd, 1920', has been traced in Foreign Office archives. It is not here printed.

³ See, e.g., Vol. IV, Nos. 293, 309, and 318.

The Emir's visit was largely of a social and ceremonial character and was marked by no unpleasant incident.

The Ministers and other important notables called upon him and His Highness the Sultan was at special pains to be polite. I trust that the interchange of courtesies which passed between them will result in improving the relations between His Highness and King Husein which have hitherto not been of a too cordial character.

I took the opportunity to invest the Emir with the Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire which was recently conferred on him.

I consider that the visit has had an excellent effect and that the honour shown to the Emir will result in strengthening the feeling of loyalty which he has always shown towards us. He spoke of his nomination as King of Mesopotamia with moderation and restraint⁴ and showed himself content to leave his own fate, as well as the settlement of all other questions, in the hands of His Majesty's Government.

I consider that if he is eventually called upon to occupy a more important position, he will prove himself to be amenable to advice and ready to conform to the policy of His Majesty's Government.

A copy of this Despatch is being sent to the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad.⁵

I have, &c.,
(for High Commissioner)
ERNEST SCOTT

⁴ See Nos. 221 and 230.

⁵ Lord Allenby's language to the Emir was approved in Foreign Office telegram No. 505 of June 2, not printed.

No. 250

Memorandum on the Future Control of the Middle East by Major H. W. Young¹

[E 4870/4870/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 17, 1920

1. Definition of the Middle East.
2. Future Relations of His Majesty's Government with the various countries of the Middle East.
3. British Advisers.
4. Finance.
5. Existing system of control from London, with possible alternatives for the future.
6. Possible central control by the Foreign Office.²
7. Possible central control by a new Department of State.²
8. Possible divided control by the Foreign Office and a new Department of State, or by the Foreign Office and one of the existing Departments of His Majesty's Government.²
9. Conclusion.

¹ An officer in the Indian Army temporarily a member of the Eastern and Egyptian Department of the Foreign Office.

² This section is not here printed.

1. *Definition of the Middle East*

The areas of the Middle East with which His Majesty's Government will be most intimately concerned after the completion of the settlement with Turkey are Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Arabia and Persia. For the maintenance of order in, and the peaceful development of, these areas His Majesty's Government have undertaken, or propose to undertake, varying measures of responsibility. These areas react upon one another, not only from their geographical position, but from the fact that the majority of their inhabitants speak the same language and belong to the same religion. In the block of territory within which they lie there are two countries, Syria and the Hejaz, for which His Majesty's Government will not in future be responsible, but in which they cannot entirely disinterest themselves. The independence of the Hejaz, the provisional independence of Syria, and the freedom of both countries from the domination of the Turk have been secured by the British arms, and with almost exclusively British support. The Hejaz, in which are situated the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina, is a country in which His Majesty's Government, as the greatest Mohammedan power in the world, cannot fail to be deeply interested. Syria marches with Palestine and Mesopotamia, and its first ruler is not only the son of the King of the Hejaz, but also the allied commander by whose assistance the British forces were enabled to complete their victory over the Turks. The future of Syria must always remain a matter of concern to His Majesty's Government, more especially that portion of it which lies across the Jordan to the east of Palestine. The object of this memorandum is to discuss the alternative methods by which His Majesty's Government may in the future most conveniently maintain connection with the countries mentioned above.

2. *Future relations of His Majesty's Government with the various countries mentioned above*

(a) *Egypt*.—The position in Egypt is that His Majesty's Government have recently declared a protectorate over that country,³ which thus forms part of the British Empire. There is an Egyptian Government, advised by British officials acting under the orders of a High Commissioner, who receives his instructions from the Foreign Office. A Commission under Lord Milner has recently visited the country⁴ with the object of reporting to His Majesty's Government upon the future relations between the British officials and the Egyptian Government. Until the report of this Commission has been received, it is assumed, for the purposes of discussion, that the system at present in force will at least form the basis of the future relations between His Majesty's Government and Egypt, i.e., that no form of direct British administration will be introduced.

(b) *Palestine*.—His Majesty's Government have declared their intention of encouraging in Palestine the formation of a National Home for the Jewish

³ On Dec. 18, 1914.

⁴ Lord Milner's Mission left England in Nov. 1919 and returned in March 1920; cf. No. 209, n. 5.

people, while ensuring that the existing rights and privileges of non-Jews should be scrupulously safeguarded.⁵ Over 80 per cent. of the population of Palestine are non-Jews, and hostile to the idea of a Jewish National Home. It appears from this that it is not intended to institute a representative government in Palestine, but to set up a British administration which shall make it possible for a Jewish National Home gradually to be formed there. The Zionists imagine that Palestine is to become eventually a Jewish state. This could only be reconciled with the principle of self-government if the country were developed to an extent that would admit of the immigration of Jews in such large numbers that they would form the majority of the population. If this is the intention of His Majesty's Government, it will presumably be found necessary to control immigration and development in Palestine with a view to the eventual establishment of a Jewish majority. This will require direct British administration for a considerable period of time. If, on the other hand, the intention is to set up a Palestinian Government on the analogy of the Egyptian Government, with safeguards for a Jewish minority, the British advisers will have to retain control to a much larger extent than is the case in Egypt, and will practically administer the country.

(c) *Mesopotamia*.—By the Treaty of Peace with Turkey, the provisional independence of Mesopotamia has been recognised, subject to its control by a mandatory power, until such time as it is able to stand alone. No term has been placed to the period of this Mandate, but it is assumed that steps will be taken to form in Mesopotamia a local constitution in such a form that it will eventually be in a position to stand by itself, and that British officials in that country will, if not immediately, at any rate in the near future, be in the position of advisers rather than of administrators.

(d) *Arabia*.—His Majesty's Government are endeavouring to secure the acceptance by the other Allied Powers of the predominance of British interests in the Arabian Peninsula, exclusive of the Hejaz.⁶ At the same time they are proposing to co-operate with the other Powers in a declaration that they disclaim any desire for territorial aggrandisement in the said Peninsula. If this policy is to be pursued, His Majesty's Government will be regarded by the other Powers as responsible for exercising political control over the independent Rulers of Arabia, but it will be out of the question to institute any direct British administration. The protectorate of Aden has been excluded from the Arabian Peninsula as defined in the proposals quoted above, and it is intended that it shall remain a British protectorate. The position in the Aden Protectorate has hitherto been that His Majesty's Government have refrained from exercising any administrative control outside the actual Peninsula of Aden. They have entered into treaty relations with the Arab chiefs of the hinterland on lines precisely similar to those concluded with independent Arab Rulers in other parts of the Peninsula. We may assume, then, that the officials of His Majesty's Government at

⁵ See Vol. VIII, No. 16, minute 1 (p. 176), and No. 243 above, n. 2.

⁶ Cf. Nos. 267 and 272 below.

Aden will be in the future, as they have been in the past, advisers rather than administrators, except in the Fortress itself.

(*e*) *Persia*.—Persia is an independent country with which His Majesty's Government have recently concluded an agreement by which certain British advisers are accepted by the Persian Government in return for assistance and support in matters of finance and in the preservation of internal order.⁷ The relations of His Majesty's Government with Persia are foreign relations.

(*f*) *Syria*.—Whether Syria is under a French mandate, or independent, as claimed by Feisal and the Nationalist Party, the relations between His Majesty's Government and Syria will be purely foreign relations. In the event of the area east of Palestine being excluded from the French sphere of control, there are three possibilities. It may either be regarded as part of the Hejaz (see (*g*) below), or as a British mandated territory (see (*b*) and (*c*)), or as a part of Feisal's kingdom in which the French disclaim interest.

(*g*) *The Hejaz*.—The relations of His Majesty's Government with the Hejaz will be purely foreign relations.

The position may be briefly summarised as follows:—

(*a*) *Egypt*.—A native government is advised by a High Commissioner, who works under the orders of the Foreign Office, though no actual treaty exists. A British Protectorate has been proclaimed after forty years of gradually increasing control. This measure is unpopular with the local Nationalist Party, and a Commission has been considering the whole question on the spot.

(*b*) *Palestine*.—No native government exists, nor can the policy of His Majesty's Government be carried out if such a government is brought into existence without special measures of administrative control.

(*c*) *Mesopotamia*.—No native government exists, but the independence of the country has been provisionally recognised subject to the advice and assistance of His Majesty's Government until it can stand alone.

(*d*) *Arabia*.—With the exception of the Fortress of Aden the whole Peninsula is governed by independent Arab rulers with whom His Majesty's Government have established, or propose to establish, treaty relations.

(*e*) *Persia*.—A native government exists with which His Majesty's Government are in treaty relations.

(*f*) *Syria*.—An unrecognised native government exists for which the French Government will have a mandate if they succeed in coming to terms with Feisal. His Majesty's Government will be in treaty relations either with the Mandatory Power or the Syrian Government.

(*g*) *The Hejaz*.—His Majesty's Government will be in treaty relations with an independent native government.

Taking the countries of the Middle East in descending order of independence, Syria and the Hejaz will be completely foreign countries, Persia and Arabia will be independent countries, advised by His Majesty's Government, Mesopotamia will be provisionally independent subject to a mandate, Palestine will require a greater measure of administrative control to ensure the fulfilment of the Zionist policy of His Majesty's Government, and Egypt

⁷ See No. 247, n. 3.

will presumably remain actually within the British Empire, while retaining its own native government. There is thus, with the possible exception of Palestine and the Fortress of Aden, no area of the Middle East over which His Majesty's Government are likely to institute direct administration. With these exceptions, the areas concerned will be nominally governed by native governments assisted by British advisers.

3. *British Advisers*

Before turning to the various alternative methods by which His Majesty's Government may in the future maintain connection with these countries, it is necessary to consider the degree of control which British advisers may be expected to exercise and the probable trend of political development in the light of past experience. The two main examples of British control of an Oriental country are Egypt and India. In Egypt, we started by advising a native government and have recently proclaimed a protectorate. This does not necessarily mean that we intend to tighten our control. It is merely another way of saying that the disappearance of Turkish suzerainty leaves us free to establish in law what has for a long time existed in practice, namely, British control over the Egyptian Government. But this is not the effect produced on Nationalist sentiment. The Nationalists regard the proclamation of a British Protectorate over Egypt as an indication that we intend to establish over the native government a still closer and more effective control.

In British India, on the other hand, we are attempting to devise a means by which direct British administration shall be replaced by a native government. This step has been rendered necessary by the growth of Nationalist sentiment in India. Even in the Native States of India there is now a demand for a greater measure of independence. But this is not nearly so marked or so difficult to meet. The reason is that our relations with the Native States of India are governed by treaty. We are bound by treaties with the Native rulers not to interfere more than is necessary to prevent serious abuse and misgovernment. It is necessary to emphasise this point if we are to profit by past experience. The time has gone by when an Oriental people will be content to be nursed into self-government by a European Power. The spread of Western education, increased facilities of communication, and above all the War, with the resultant emergence of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination, have combined to breed in the minds of Eastern agitators a distrust for, and impatience of, Western control. We cannot ignore this universal phenomenon without endangering, and possibly losing beyond recall, our position in the East. It lies at the root of Indian unrest, of Feisal's hatred of the French, and of Mustapha Kemal's determination to resist the Turkish Peace Treaty. It finds a reflection in the spread of the Wahabi movement,⁸ in the aggression of the Imam on our Aden Protectorate,⁹ in the

⁸ A puritan movement within Islam led by Ibn Saud, ruler of the Nejd Wahabis or Itchwan (brothers).

⁹ Troops of the Imam of the Yemen had invaded the Aden Protectorate to which he laid claim; see *The Times*, June 4, 1920, p. 17.

murder of British Officers in Kurdistan,¹⁰ and in the demands of the Afghan Delegation.¹¹ It is a ready-made weapon for Bolshevik propaganda and a forcing-house for Pan-Islam. At the same time, we must be careful to distinguish between the wild cries of the extremist, anxious to secure for himself and to deny to the foreigner what he regards as the spoils of government, and the childish vanity of the masses on which he brings his armoury to bear. If we could but descend to tickling that vanity ourselves, we should deprive the agitator of his most powerful weapon. This could be done by recognising the existence of native governments and entering into treaty relations with them. Provisional independence under a Mandate is not incompatible with the establishment of treaty relations between the mandatory power and the people of the country. It is, however, incompatible with the establishment of direct administration by the mandatory, though this is not yet fully recognised by the peoples concerned. It is not only the people of the East who object to being treated as children or wards. This is the natural accompaniment of any national feeling. The point is that this national sentiment is again awake in those Eastern countries where it has slumbered so long. It is the Western nations who have evoked it, and it is for the Western nations to direct it into healthy channels through the medium of advisers attached to the various native governments—and here a word must be said about the relations between British advisers and Oriental governments, which are the crux of the Middle Eastern question. There is always a tendency for British officials in an Oriental country to be impatient of Oriental inefficiency and to assume direct administrative control. This tendency is enormously encouraged when the executive authority is in the hands of the British official, and the result is that the necessity for promoting the growth of native government is lost sight of under the pressure of demands for efficiency. This is the reason why it has been found so difficult to evolve a workable scheme of Indian reform. Few natives are fit to take upon themselves the duties and responsibilities which have become inseparably connected with administration in India. The standard is too high. Even when the executive authority remains in native hands, as in Egypt, British intolerance of inefficiency, coupled with the demand of the people themselves for the unrecognised advantages of British methods of administration, have resulted in a gradual multiplication of British officials and the consequent relegation to the background of the duty of encouraging native government. If the various countries of the Middle East are eventually to become independent nations, it is essential that such European advice as may be given to them during the period for which they are confessedly incapable of standing alone should be given in such a way that the eventual disappearance of European advisers will be the normal culmination of the measures taken

¹⁰ Two British officers, Mr. J. H. Bill and Capt. K. R. Scott, had been attacked and killed in the Zab valley on Nov. 3, 1919.

¹¹ i.e. demands relating to 'the international status of Afghanistan' put forward by the Afghan delegation at the Indo-Afghan Conference which had opened at Mussoorie on April 17; cf. No. 377 below.

during the time of tutelage. We are now experiencing in British India the difficulties which face a European Government when it attempts to relax direct administrative control. We shall inevitably experience the same difficulties, in proportion to the measure of direct executive control which we now institute, in those areas of the Middle East for which we have assumed, or propose to assume, responsibility.

4. *Finance*

There is another point which must not be lost sight of in any discussion of our position in the Middle East. If we are to take upon ourselves the burden of developing these countries, and establishing in them the order [? and] the security without which development is impossible, we must face the fact that, for some time at least, capital must be found to invest in them. This must naturally necessitate a measure of financial supervision proportionate to the inability of the native Government to secure unaided a reasonable return for our outlay, whether this takes the form of direct expenditure, of a loan, or of a guarantee. The financial position is as follows:—

(a) *Egypt*.—Egypt would normally be financially self-supporting, though at present the British forces in that country have been increased to such an extent, for strategic reasons, that the expenditure involved is not covered by the fixed contribution paid by the Egyptian Government. This is, however, merely a passing phase.

(b) and (c) *Palestine and Mesopotamia*.—It is early yet to expect either Mesopotamia or Palestine to be self-supporting financially. In both countries there will have to be for some time a British garrison paid for by the British tax-payer. If the two countries are to be developed, outside capital will probably be required and it may prove more satisfactory for this to take the form of a loan from, or guaranteed by, His Majesty's Treasury.

(d) *Arabia*.—It has been found necessary during the War to pay subsidies to certain of the independent Rulers of the Arabian Peninsula, who were formerly within the Turkish Empire, such as Ibn Saud and the Idrisi. Other Rulers, such as the Sultan of Muscat, the Sultan of Shehr and Mokalla and the Sheikhs of the tribes in the Aden Protectorate, received before the War, and are still receiving, subsidies or stipends from Indian revenues. The Fortress of Aden would only be self-supporting if Aden were no longer a free port, though, even so, it could not pay for the British garrison. It appears, therefore, that His Majesty's Government, in possible partnership with the Indian Government and the Governments of Colonies from which Moslems make the Pilgrimage to Mecca, will in future be called upon to undertake a certain amount of expenditure in the Arabian Peninsula. Without such expenditure His Majesty's Government would be unable to exercise effective political control, and their claim to a special position in the Peninsula would fall to the ground.

(e) *Persia*.—A loan has been supplied to the Persian Government in return for their acceptance of a measure of British advice and control. This loan

is secured on Persian revenues, but was found in the first place by His Majesty's Government.

(f) *Syria*.—The Arab administration of Syria was originally assisted by a solely British subsidy. On the evacuation of the Arab sphere by British troops and the occupation of the coastal area of Syria by the French, this subsidy was shared between the British and French Governments. For the area which is to be under a French Mandate, His Majesty's Government will, of course, have no financial responsibility; but if that portion of Syria which lies east of the Jordan and south of Deraa is to fall within the British sphere, it will in all probability need some financial support, at any rate to begin with.

(g) *The Hejaz*.—Ever since the Arab revolt started, a subsidy has been paid by His Majesty's Government to the King of the Hejaz to replace that paid to him by the Turkish Government as Emir of Mecca. So soon as the independence of the Hejaz is finally ratified in the Turkish Peace Treaty it will become difficult, if not impossible, for His Majesty's Government to be the sole providers of financial support to the Hejaz; but it may prove desirable for them to co-operate with other Allied Powers interested in Islam to provide the King of the Hejaz with either a subsidy or a loan.

5. *Existing system of control from London, with possible alternatives for the future*

Control from London is at present exercised as follows:—

(a) *Egypt*.—By the Foreign Office, through the High Commissioner, Cairo.

(b) *Palestine*.—By the War Office, through the Commander-in-Chief. The administration of Palestine is military, but a Chief Political Officer, in direct communication with the Foreign Office, is attached to the Commander-in-Chief. A proposal is under consideration by which the Chief Administrator of Palestine will assume political as well as administrative functions in direct correspondence with the Foreign Office. He will, however, remain under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief so long as Palestine remains under military administration.

(c) *Mesopotamia*.—By the War Office, through the General Officer Commanding. A Civil Administration has been set up under a Civil Commissioner, who is in direct communication with the India Office. Questions of policy are discussed by the Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs.

(d) *Arabia: Persian Gulf Coast*.—By the India Office, through the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

Nejd and Hail.—By the India Office, through the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad. Questions of policy are discussed by the Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs.

Aden and the Hadramaut.—By the India Office, through the Government of India, the Government of Bombay, and the Resident, Aden, for administration. By the War Office, through the General Officer Commanding, Aden, for military measures in the Aden Protectorate. By the Foreign Office,

through the High Commissioner, Cairo, and the Resident, Aden, for political questions.

Yemen and Asir.—By the Foreign Office, through the High Commissioner, Cairo, and the Resident, Aden. Questions of policy are discussed by the Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs.

(e) *Persia.*—By the Foreign Office, through His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran. Questions of policy are discussed by the Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs.

(f) *Syria.*—By the Foreign Office, through the High Commissioner, Cairo; and by the War Office, through the General Officer Commanding, Egyptian Expeditionary Force.

(g) *The Hejaz.*—By the Foreign Office, through the High Commissioner, Cairo, and the British Agent at Jeddah. Questions of policy are discussed by the Inter-Departmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs.

It is evident from the above survey that the present arrangement is merely a makeshift, and it has always been contemplated that, on the conclusion of Peace with Turkey, the whole question should be carefully considered with a view to revising the temporary position created by the War. This revision may take the form of centralised control, either under an existing Department of State or under a new Department to be created for that purpose; or, on the other hand, it may take the form of a permanent division of the Middle East into spheres of control allotted to existing Departments of State, with or without co-ordination by a Middle Eastern Committee or Conference.

It is clear that the only existing Department which could exercise control over all the areas of the Middle East, as defined in paragraph 1 of this memorandum, is the Foreign Office. The relations between His Majesty's Government and the independent countries of Persia and the Hejaz, and their relations with the French Government as mandatory for Syria, or, alternatively, with an independent Syrian state, can only be foreign relations. The intimate connection between the Hejaz and the remainder of Arabia, coupled with the proposed self-denying ordinance by which His Majesty's Government propose to disclaim all desire for territorial aggrandisement in the Peninsula, render it desirable, though not, perhaps, absolutely necessary, that the Foreign Office should also conduct relations with other independent Arab rulers, or, at all events, with those whose territories border on the Hejaz. Egypt and Palestine are countries in which other European Powers are closely interested and in connection with which questions are continually arising which involve diplomatic correspondence. This is especially so in the case of Palestine, which will become practically an international country if it is to be a National Home for Jews from all the countries of the world. This makes it essential that the representative of His Majesty's Government in Palestine should be in a position to correspond direct with representatives in foreign countries. For this procedure to work smoothly, it appears preferable that he should be under the orders of the Foreign Office, even if a special measure of administrative control is found necessary in Palestine.

The effect on local nationalist sentiment of Egypt being removed from Foreign Office control and of Palestine and Mesopotamia being entrusted to an administrative, rather than a political, department must also be reckoned with. Another point to be borne in mind is that, as mandatory for Palestine and Mesopotamia, His Majesty's Government will be responsible to the League of Nations, with which body they will presumably correspond through diplomatic channels. We may take it then that if the control of the relations of His Majesty's Government with all the areas of the Middle East, as defined in paragraph 1, is to be vested in a single existing Department of State, that Department can only be the Foreign Office. The possibility of a new Department being created for the whole of the Middle East, including the foreign relations concerned, is discussed in paragraph 7.¹² The possibility of a new Department being created for the control of Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia, exclusive of the Hejaz, while the Foreign Office retain Persia, Syria and the Hejaz, is considered in paragraph 8.¹²

. . .

9. *Conclusions*

Of the three possible alternatives—

- (a) Control by an Eastern Department of the Foreign Office which should include a small number of officials experienced in administrative work,
- (b) Control by a new Department of State, with authority to conduct foreign relations, and
- (c) Divided control,

the least objectionable appears to be (a); (b) introduces a new departure which raises questions of high policy, and (c) is open to many objections. The subordinate questions of the channel of communication between His Majesty's Government and their representatives in the Middle East, and the provision of the necessary personnel both in London and on the spot, cannot be discussed until a decision has been arrived at on these three alternatives.

The matter is one of considerable urgency, as questions are arising daily which call for early decision.¹³

H. W. YOUNG

¹² This section is not here printed.

¹³ In a memorandum (not printed), dated June 8 and prepared for circulation to the Cabinet, Lord Curzon advised the creation of a Middle Eastern Department and suggested that 'if it be considered inexpedient or premature at the present juncture to constitute this Department a Ministry, and to place it under a separate Secretary of State, the Department be placed provisionally under a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State responsible to and taking his orders from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs'.

Note from Earl Curzon to the French Ambassador

[E 4658/2/44]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 18, 1920

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your notes of the 10th and 12th instant, with enclosures,¹ and to transmit herewith, as requested by your Excellency, copies of the message delivered by Field-Marshal Lord Allenby to the Emir Feisal and of the Emir's reply.²

Before dealing with the various points raised in your Excellency's note of the 12th instant, I venture with all possible friendliness to demur to the suggestion made therein that the separate and different communications recently addressed to the Emir have encouraged his resistance by leading him to hope that he can rely alternately on the support of Great Britain and of France for the encouragement of his ambitious designs in opposition to one or the other Power. The communication addressed by Field-Marshal Lord Allenby to the Emir was previously shown by him to General Gourand [*sic*] with the specific object of precluding any such possibility, and his action in this respect was in accordance with the attitude of frank and loyal co-operation with their French Allies which has consistently been followed by His Majesty's Government.

I am not aware whether the Emir has addressed any reply to the declaration transmitted to him by General Gourand in the name of the French Government, of which your Excellency did me the honour to communicate a copy on the 10th May.³ If he has done so, I presume that he has made demands on the lines of those put forward by him in his reply to Lord Allenby, and that he has declined to come to Europe unless those demands are complied with. But whether he has done so or not, I am of opinion that the time has now arrived for the two Governments to make the position perfectly clear to him.

I am in entire agreement with the view expressed by your Excellency as to the necessity of some measures being taken to bring to an end the present state of affairs in the area occupied by the French forces, and I note with satisfaction that the French Government recognise that an early and satisfactory solution of these problems is desirable not only in French interests, but also in those of His Majesty's Government. It is for this reason, and since the French Government have been good enough to lay their views before His Majesty's Government, that I venture to make the following observations.

The two Governments are in close accord as to the objects to be achieved. The best means of obtaining them alone remain to be considered. While fully recognising that the French authorities must be the best judges of the military measures necessary to meet the local situation, and recognising also

¹ These notes and enclosures are not printed.

² Nos. 244 and 248.

³ This declaration was identical with the telegram from M. Millerand to the Emir Feisal summarized in para. 1 of No. 258 below.

that they have every right to take such measures, I am nevertheless of opinion that the immediate occupation of the Homs-Aleppo railway, desirable though it may be from a tactical point of view, might yet, viewed in its broader aspect, precipitate a crisis which might finally defeat the aims of both Governments.

Such a step, with its consequent added discontent and disorder, might well result in the Emir Feisal definitely and finally throwing in his lot with the Turkish Nationalists, who, as your Excellency is aware, are now in touch with Bolshevik elements through the Caucasus. Such an eventuality would be fraught with obvious dangers both to the French Government and to His Majesty's Government. I do not believe that the Emir Feisal is as yet disposed thus to throw in his lot with the forces of disorder, and I am strongly of opinion that it is in the best interests of both Governments to attempt every available means of obtaining a satisfactory solution before incurring the risk of a Turco-Arab alliance. Such a solution is in the view of His Majesty's Government only to be hoped for if the Emir Feisal can be prevailed upon to come to Europe.

I am in agreement with the views expressed in your Excellency's note⁴ as to the anomaly of the Emir being at the same time the representative of the Hedjaz and the ruler of Syria under the mandate of France. I am, however, of opinion that the effect of a notification to King Hussein to the effect that Feisal can no longer be regarded as delegate of the Hedjaz, on the ground that he occupies the position of Emir in a State for which France has the mandate, could not fail to have a most unfavourable effect on the King. The result would be serious to both French and English relations with the Hedjaz, the satisfactory continuance of which are important to both Governments from the point of view of the pilgrimage.

I venture to hope, therefore, that your Excellency will be so good as to suggest the following course to the French Government:

That the Emir Feisal should be reminded that he has already received an invitation from the Peace Conference to attend at their next meeting which is now fixed for the end of June. That he should be called upon definitely to accept this invitation without delay, and that it should be pointed out to him that the only conditions by which his position in Syria can be definitely established, and his relations with the neighbouring territories and communities determined, are his personal presence and consultation with the Governments of France and Great Britain, who for their part are prepared to treat him and his representations with every consideration. Should he fail however to come to Europe, the invitation cannot again be renewed and the Emir must be prepared to face the following alternatives:—

1. That he would no longer be recognised as representing the Hedjaz at the Peace Conference of the Powers.
2. That all financial assistance both from the French Government and from His Majesty's Government would cease forthwith.

⁴ The reference is to M. Cambon's note of May 12.

3. That the French Government would be at liberty to occupy the Homs-Aleppo Railway for the objects specified by them.

A joint communication of this nature, demonstrating equally the close accord of the two Governments, and their opinion that only by a visit of the Emir to Europe is there a real hope of reaching a satisfactory settlement of the questions involved, will hardly fail to impress him with the gravity of the consequences entailed by a continued refusal.

I therefore venture to request your Excellency to be so good as to lay the proposal for a joint communication to the Emir on the lines suggested above, before the French Government at the earliest possible opportunity. I would request, at the same time, that the proposed action in respect of the Homs-Aleppo Railway should be deferred until the proposal has been considered.

I have read with care the views of M. Millerand, communicated to me in your Excellency's note, on the question of the channel through which His Majesty's Government can best, in future, conduct their relations with the Emir Feisal.⁵ While His Majesty's Government fully appreciate the point of view therein expressed, they are nevertheless of opinion that such an arrangement would in practice be open to very serious objections, particularly in view of the fact that the future boundaries of Syria and Palestine are not yet determined.

In the event of the proposed joint communication to the Emir being carried into effect, His Majesty's Government consider that the danger of Feisal adopting a policy of alternate appeal to England and France will be eliminated.

In these circumstances it appears to His Majesty's Government that the retention of a British liaison officer at Damascus, while essential to British interests from the point of view of Palestine and Mesopotamia, is at the same time in no way prejudicial to the interests of France.

Enquiries are being made into the question of the port dues of Haifa, and I shall have the honour to communicate again with your Excellency on this subject when further information is available.

With regard to the Hedjaz Delegation, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I am in general agreement with the terms of the draft reply which the French Government were good enough to refer to His Majesty's Government in your note of the 12th instant,⁶ but I venture to suggest the following minor alterations. I am inclined to the view that the phrase on p. 3 beginning, 'Dont le bon sens et l'histoire . . .' might be regarded as expressing a certain attitude of condescension, and for that reason might be

⁵ The reference is to M. Cambon's note of May 12 which stated that M. Millerand 'pense que c'est par l'intermédiaire du Haut Commissaire français en Syrie que doivent désormais s'établir les rapports du Maréchal Allenby avec Damas'.

⁶ The draft reply rejected the protest of the Hedjaz Delegation and asserted that it was for the Peace Conference to determine the conditions of peace and to define the status and frontiers of new states. A large part of the draft is incorporated in paragraphs three onwards of enclosure 2 in No. 254 below.

omitted as tending to produce a feeling of irritation.⁷ I am unable to express an opinion on the immediately succeeding paragraph, in the absence of official information that the Emir Feisal has actually appealed to the French Government, in the name of the Syrian people, for them to accept the mandate for Syria. Subject to these alterations I see no objection to the proposed reply being returned to the Hedjaz Delegation by the Peace Conference, to whom their letter was addressed, as soon as the Conference is again in session.

I have, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

⁷ This phrase referred to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, 'dont le bon sens et l'histoire démontrent par ailleurs le caractère impératif'.

No. 252

Sir A. Geddes (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received June 2)

No. 687 [E 5631/1331/44]

WASHINGTON, May 21, 1920

My Lord:

With reference to your despatch No. 436 of April 21st,¹ I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of a message from the President to the Senate dated May 17th,² and dealing, in reply to a Senate resolution, with the restrictions alleged to be imposed in various foreign countries, chiefly the component parts of the British Empire, on the acquisition and development of oil-bearing territory by United States Citizens.

To this statement the facts contained in your telegram No. 433 of May 7th³ would enable me to return an immediate reply. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that the chief argument of men like Senator Phelan who foment this particular form of anti-British agitation, is based on the contention that the oil-sources controlled by the United States are rapidly deteriorating while it is the undeveloped and potentially rich fields which are being monopolised by Great Britain, I hesitate to issue a statement which might be the prelude to a long and bitter controversy.

At the same time and since it is in my view most improbable that this agitation will die down or that we shall be able indefinitely to ignore it, I would suggest for Your Lordship's consideration, that, the subject having now been definitely raised in the Senate here, a reply to the anti-British allegations implied or expressed might most fittingly be made in Parliament. The possibility of including in such a reply a reassuring statement as to the policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to oil-exploitation in those

¹ Not printed.

² For the text of this message, see Senate Document No. 272, *The U.S. Congressional Record*, vol. 59, part 11, pp. 7720-7. For a note of May 12 on the same subject addressed to Lord Curzon by the U.S. Ambassador in London, see *F.R.U.S.*, 1920, vol. ii, pp. 651-5.

³ No. 247.

parts of former Turkey for which they propose to assume the mandate is one which can only be considered in London.

Mr. Lindsay has already, in his despatch No. 54 of January 9th,⁴ referred to the close relations existing during the war between the Standard Oil Company and the Administration, a relationship which there is good reason to suppose extended also to certain members of the legislation [*sic*] such as Senator Phelan. This *rapprochement*, which was brought about chiefly by the efforts of Mr. Bedford, President of the Standard Oil Company, who gave his services to the Government in connexion with the direction of oil supplies at a nominal salary of one dollar a year, has completely reversed the pre-war relationship under which it was nothing less than courting disaster for any member of the administration to incur the suspicion of an affiliation with the oil interests. The extent of the influences thus acquired by the Company in administration circles may be gauged by the fact that the former Director of the Bureau of Mines, the Department which is directly responsible for oil questions, has accepted, undoubtedly on the recommendation and with the support of Mr. Bedford, a position on the American Petroleum Institute, while it is possibly also not without significance that Mr. Lane, formerly Secretary of the Interior, has joined the board of a large oil corporation on his retirement from the administration. This new orientation of the oil interest *vis-à-vis* the administration cannot but increase, to a sensible degree, the dangers to Anglo-American relations inherent in the whole question.

I need not remind Your Lordship of the evidence already in the possession of the Foreign Office showing the connection of the Standard Oil Company with Irish agitation.

I have, &c.,
A. C. GEDDES

⁴ Not printed. Mr. Lindsay was Counsellor in H.M. Embassy at Washington.

No. 253

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 10)

No. 559 [E 6180/2854/44]

CAIRO, May 28, 1920

My Lord,

I have the honour to submit the following remarks on the question of the grant of subsidies to Arab Rulers, with reference to Your Lordship's Despatch No. 532 of May 4th. (E 3915/2854/44), transmitting the minutes of a meeting held at the Foreign Office on April 17th.¹ in which I observe that the Treasury are not yet convinced of the necessity for the continuance of the subsidies.

It appears to me that, to arrive at a just decision on this subject, it is necessary in the first place to compare the position of the different rulers now and before the war, to weigh the services of each during that period, to examine whether any responsibility rests on His Majesty's Government

¹ Not printed.

for the changes which have occurred, and, finally, to consider whether, on grounds of morality or expediency, it is justifiable to impose on the British taxpayer the burden of providing some or all of them with monetary assistance in the future.

The beginning of the war saw an effective, if not entirely efficient, Ottoman administration in the Hejaz and Yemen; Ibn Rashid a mediatized Turkish vassal; the Idrisi in revolt against the ruling power but already discussing terms of peace; and Ibn Saud, who had not long before ejected the Turks from Hasa and Qatif, showing a disposition to resume his allegiance, provided that he was allowed a free hand as Vali of Nejd, and given an adequate stipend. It will be seen that the feeling of racial consciousness, which is now so marked, was already showing itself even in the more remote parts of the Peninsula, but a study of the records of the time will also show that the Ottoman Government, however unwillingly, was beginning to realise its incapacity to retain by force the Arab Countries, and was preparing to grant a measure of self-government which might satisfy the aspirations of its inhabitants.

The consideration of the subject was, however, abruptly broken off by the commencement of the war and, after the Ottoman Government had declared against the Allied Powers, Great Britain, taking advantage of the discontent which already existed, made promises to the Sherif of Mecca, Ibn Saud and the Idrisi which induced them definitely to cast off their allegiance and throw in their lot with the Allies. I do not propose to examine, and compare in detail, the services performed by these three rulers, but I think it may fairly be said that each, according to his capacity, rendered real and effective assistance at a time when the result of the war still hung in the balance and, by so doing, brought to nought the plans for a *Jehad*, diverted or rendered innocuous large Turkish forces, and greatly facilitated our task in keeping open to traffic the Red Sea.

It may be said with some show of justice that they have had their reward in gaining their independence and freeing themselves from the Turkish yoke, but the fact must not be lost sight of that, with the removal of the dominant influence, the Arabian Peninsula was left without administrative and financial means or experience for the preservation of order and for the substitution of effective local Government in place of what had existed previously.

This applies in particular to the Hejaz and I cannot refrain from thinking that the promises made by His Majesty's Government impose a certain moral obligation to ensure that the future of these countries is at least as prosperous as their past.

I do not, however, wish to press unduly this point, since sentimental considerations must give way to those of economy at the present time, and I will pass on to the more practical aspects of the case.

As Your Lordship is aware, the Arab revolt was not regarded with sympathy either in India or in our other Mohammedan Countries. This feeling still exists today. The revolt can only be justified by its success and we shall undoubtedly lay ourselves open to severe criticism if the Peninsula passes into a state of anarchy.

Further than this, the Allied policy with regard to Syria and Palestine is not in accord with the wishes of the local populations and has already exposed His Majesty's Government to a charge of breach of promise and opened the field to Turkish and Bolshevik propaganda from the North.

The situation in the Middle East today gives rise to grave misgivings and seems unlikely to improve in the near future. On this account, I consider it is of great importance that, if we gain a special position in the Arabian Peninsula, His Majesty's Government should so employ it as to earn the gratitude of the people and silence the criticism of those detractors who accuse us of cynicism and self-interest in our treatment of the Arabs.

At the present moment we are in a favourable position to achieve this, since the factors which have rendered so restless the Arabs in Syria and Mesopotamia have not operated with any great force in the Peninsula itself, and its Rulers, with the exception of the Imam Yahya² and the new Emir of Hail, who has in point of fact come under the influence of Ibn Saud, have given satisfactory proofs that they are prepared to look to us for help and guidance and protection.

The questions then arise whether we can gain our object without payment, and, if not, whether the results achieved will justify the expenditure.

As regards the former point, I consider that the experience of the last four years shows the answer to be emphatically in the negative. I do not advocate any undue interference in the internal and local affairs of the Peninsula, but I presume that we shall attempt to adjust the relations between the different rulers and claim to influence all foreign relations, and it is only reasonable to suppose that the rulers will require some *quid pro quo*. Furthermore, moral influence has its effect in the East, but it will not always prove such a strong deterrent as the threat to cut off supplies, more especially in countries which are far removed from civilisation and where it is impossible to achieve a purpose [? except] by armed force.

I do not think it is too much to say that if we attempt to gain a predominant influence in Arabia without being prepared to pay for it, our efforts will result in failure.

As regards the advantages to be gained, I place first and foremost the chance of recovering and maintaining our prestige in the Middle East.

We have destroyed the Power which, however badly, ruled Arabia. We must put something in its place, and, in so doing, endeavour to re-establish our good name for disinterestedness and sympathy with Moslem races. We are, and shall continue to be, hampered in Syria and Palestine. It is therefore the more necessary to seize our opportunity in the Peninsula where the conditions are favourable and where we shall not be exposed to foreign rivalry once our special position is recognised.

Secondly, there is considerable evidence to show that a determined effort is being made to unite Islam against all European Powers. A friendly Arabia will be an important check to this.

Thirdly, it is necessary to have a friendly population in the countries bordering our vital sea routes.

² See No. 250, n. 9.

Equal to these in importance, is the necessity of keeping open the pilgrimage routes to the Holy Places and of ensuring that the Pilgrimage itself is undertaken under better conditions than formerly.

We are under judgment of the Moslems in all parts of the world in this matter, and failure will do us incalculable harm.

Fifthly, I would place the advantages to British trade which the opening up of the interior of the Peninsula will afford, and, sixthly, the desirability of preventing other powers from gaining a predominant position, more especially in South West Arabia.

I trust that the above considerations will be sufficient to show that the advantages to be won are not small and that, in the event of His Majesty's Government being granted a special position there, the necessity of affording monetary assistance, until such time as the different countries can make their own way, will be recognised.

I understand that it may be difficult for His Majesty's Government to provide all the money and that joint subsidies or loans may be necessary. This would be unfortunate from a British point of view but it would not alter the principle which I am endeavouring to lay down. It would merely mean that the responsibility, and therefore the credit to be gained, would be collective. I am unaware of the reasons which call for a joint loan and should have thought that the Subsidies granted to the Rulers of Bahrein, Muscat, and Koweit by the Government of India before the war, would have furnished a useful precedent in claiming the sole right to give monetary assistance now.

I do not advocate the permanent continuance of subsidies on the present scale, and I would gradually replace them with stipends and loans.

All the Rulers, with perhaps the exception of Ibn Rashid, possess sea ports or tracts of land or other resources which are capable of development, and I consider that loans should be granted where there seems a good prospect of a productive return and where security can be offered.

Stipends should, I think, be granted to King Husein, Ibn Saud and the Idrisi.³ The case of Ibn Rashid is of relative unimportance, while that of the Imam Yahya is still so obscure that it is idle to consider it now. Eventually, we shall probably find it cheaper to pay than to fight.

I also consider that certain conditions should be attached, such as the maintenance of internal peace, acceptance of our control of foreign relations, and the keeping open of the trade and pilgrimage routes. These would doubtless be embodied in the form of a treaty with each ruler.

With regard to Mr. Phillip's⁴ suggestion that it might be more satisfactory to 'back one ruler only', I would observe that it has already become evident

³ In reply to an earlier despatch from Lord Allenby, No. 497 of May 14 (not printed), urging the granting of a subsidy to the Idrisi, Lord Curzon, in his telegram No. 502 of June 1 (not printed), replied that the whole question of subsidies was under examination: 'In the meantime we cannot set the inconvenient and dangerous precedent of giving what appears to us an extravagant subsidy to this particular Chief.'

⁴ Mr. F. Phillips, Assistant Secretary in the Treasury, and Treasury representative at the interdepartmental meeting of April 17 to discuss subsidies to Arab rulers.

that the ideal of subsidising the various Chiefs through one overlord is an impossible one. There is no ruler who would be accepted by the remainder as paramount, and there is none who could be trusted to make the right distribution of the funds. King Husein, whom, no doubt, Mr. Phillips had in mind, has indeed proved the least likely to be accepted as suzerain, and to endeavour to bolster him up as Grand King of Arabia, by paying other subsidies through him, would be a politically unsound, if not an actually dangerous, policy to adopt.

The question as to the amounts of the stipends and loans is one which requires further consideration and in this despatch I have not attempted to do more than lay before Your Lordship the broad considerations, which, in my opinion, justify the adoption of the principle that their payment in the future is an investment which is necessary and which will bring in its due return.

A copy of this despatch is being sent to the Resident, Aden, the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, and to the Foreign Department, Delhi.

I have, &c.,
ALLENBY

No. 254

Note from the French Ambassador to Earl Curzon (Received June 1)

[E 5598/2/44]

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE À LONDRES, 31 mai 1920

L'ambassadeur de France a l'honneur de communiquer à sa Seigneurie le Comte Curzon de Kedleston la réponse de M. le Président du Conseil Français à la note du Gouvernement Britannique en date du 18 Mai 1920.¹

ENCLOSURE I IN NO. 254

Reply of M. Millerand to British Note respecting Syria

PARIS, 25 mai 1920

M. Millerand a pris connaissance avec la plus grande attention de la réponse adressée le 18 Mai courant par Lord Curzon à M. Paul Cambon relativement aux vues politiques du Gouvernement Français quant à la Syrie.

Le Président du Conseil est heureux de constater que le Gouvernement Anglais est d'accord sur les lignes essentielles de son exposé: obligation pour la France de mettre fin aux intrigues qui ont créé un état d'insécurité de plus en plus dangereux en Cilicie et en Syrie, utilité d'une communication jointe marquant vis-à-vis de Feysal l'entente étroite et l'intérêt commun des deux Gouvernements, nécessité de définir et de limiter la position de Feysal à son rôle éventuel en Syrie sous le mandat français.

S'il était besoin de prouver l'intérêt que présente une communication jointe et identique des deux Gouvernements, on en trouverait la preuve dans

¹ No. 251.

le fait que l'Émir Feysal, interprétant d'une manière tendancieuse la communication du Maréchal Allenby, a écrit récemment au Général Gouraud: 'Le Gouvernement anglais, notre Allié commun, m'ayant reconnu comme Chef suprême du Gouvernement syrien' . . . c'est-à-dire d'une région que la Conférence de la Paix a placé sous le mandat français. La France bien que ne doutant à aucun degré de la loyauté d'action des autorités anglaises, a un intérêt de premier ordre à ne laisser aucune échappatoire à l'Émir, qui prend une attitude de plus en plus contraire à ses engagements et qui est, en fait, à l'origine de toutes les attaques des bandes chérifiennes contre les troupes françaises.

La nouvelle communication à faire à Feysal, pour lui demander pour la dernière fois s'il veut se rendre à la Conférence, ne doit lui laisser aucun doute sur les conséquences qu'aurait son refus. Les termes de ses réponses au Maréchal Allenby et au Général Gouraud exigent que les conditions de sa venue soient nettement définies, et ne laissent d'ailleurs pas l'impression qu'il soit disposé à s'y prêter, sa politique ayant été jusqu'ici de forcer la main aux puissances et de ruiner la situation de la France en Syrie par tous les moyens au mépris de ses engagements.

Dans la réponse au Maréchal Allenby,² l'Émir prétend parler au nom de la Mésopotamie comme de la Syrie, en les déclarant États indépendants, se refuse à accepter le mandat donné respectivement au Royaume-Uni et à la France, réclame l'inclusion de la Palestine dans la Syrie, conteste la position réservée aux Sionistes, et veut obtenir à cet égard des assurances avant de se rendre à la Conférence.

Dans sa réponse au Général Gouraud, l'Émir réclame comme un droit résultant de l'état de fait existant la reconnaissance de l'indépendance d'une Syrie une et indivisible incluant la Palestine, qu'il revendique en réclamant à cet effet l'aide de la France, tout en refusant le mandat donné par la Conférence de la Paix à cette puissance, et en reniant les termes mêmes de l'accord qu'il a signé le 6 Janvier.³

On ne saurait laisser l'Émir Feysal continuer son jeu actuel qui consiste à se faire nommer Roi de Syrie par un Congrès improvisé et sans titres, à refuser le mandat français au mépris des décisions de la Conférence de la Paix, à témoigner de toutes manières dans les faits son hostilité à la France en armant des bandes contre elle en liaison avec les nationalistes turcs, tout en cherchant à l'amuser par des assurances verbales et en gagnant du temps pour user les troupes françaises, jusqu'au jour où il pourra résolument se lever contre elles. Il vient encore de se refuser à autoriser quelque espèce de transports que ce soit sur la voie ferrée d'Alep, tant que le Gouvernement Français n'aura pas fait droit 'aux justes revendications du Congrès syrien,' compromettant par là le sort des colonnes françaises du Nord et marquant nettement l'appui ainsi donné aux attaques des nationalistes turcs.

Il n'y a plus lieu de reculer devant le risque de voir Feysal se joindre aux nationalistes turcs: dès à présent, il a pris en fait cette position, dont il a

² No. 248.

³ For this agreement, see Vol. IV, Nos. 416 and 421; cf. also No. 221 above.

tous les avantages, puisqu'il garde en même temps à l'égard de la France des formes hypocrites que nous avons intérêt à démasquer. Nous n'éviterons pas davantage une alliance des Bolcheviks et des Turcs et ne pourrions y parer en témoignant de la faiblesse ou de la crainte.

Le Gouvernement Français est prêt à adhérer à la suggestion anglaise et à adresser à Feysal une nouvelle invitation à se rendre à la Conférence. Mais il considère comme essentiel que cette communication soit faite au nom des deux Gouvernements par le Général Gouraud: c'est la France qui a reçu le mandat sur la Syrie, c'est elle qui a pris des engagements à l'égard des minorités chrétiennes de Cilicie, c'est elle qui est menacée de la manière la plus directe et la plus grave par les intrigues et l'attitude de l'Émir. Le moment est venu de définir et de limiter la position réelle de celui-ci, qui ne saurait à la fois être représentant du Hedjaz (et même de l'Arabie entière), revendiquant la Mésopotamie comme la Syrie, et prince d'une Syrie placée sous le mandat français et incluant la Palestine contre l'accord des deux Gouvernements. Cela est peut-être plus dangereux encore pour l'Angleterre dans l'avenir que pour la France dans le présent; dans tous les cas, ce n'est pas plus acceptable pour l'une Puissance que pour l'autre. Le jour où la question aura été réglée, le Gouvernement Français sera l'intermédiaire nécessaire du Gouvernement Syrien.

Il n'y a pas lieu de craindre que ce refus de considérer Feysal comme le délégué autorisé du Roi Hussein puisse mécontenter ce dernier, car il a fait lui-même la déclaration la plus formelle en ce sens à l'officier français délégué auprès de lui et a ajouté qu'il en informait le Gouvernement Anglais;⁴ il dénie toute autorité à l'Émir pour le représenter personnellement, même en Syrie, et pour parler au nom des Arabes. Il serait aisé de s'en assurer en lui posant directement la question.

La réponse à Feysal devrait définir la position de la question par rapport à la Conférence de la Paix, répondre à ses propres déclarations faites au Maréchal Allenby et au Général Gouraud, viser les termes mêmes de ses engagements vis-à-vis du Gouvernement Français et indiquer clairement que, s'il ne se rend pas à l'invitation qui lui est faite, il cessera d'avoir, aux yeux des Puissances une position officielle (que l'attitude du Roi Hussein rend d'ailleurs, en toute hypothèse difficile à maintenir).

M. Millerand a l'honneur d'adresser au Gouvernement Anglais un projet de déclaration dans ce sens; il compte recevoir très prochainement son assentiment,⁵ en raison de la situation militaire qui ne permet pas au Gouvernement Français, sans courir les risques les plus graves, de tolérer plus longtemps les agissements des bandes chérifiennes en étant privé de la seule voie pratique de ravitaillement et de transport qui existe pour la défense de nos divisions de Cilicie contre les troupes turques, le chemin de fer dont disposaient les Anglais quand ils occupaient la région et dont l'occupation seule a permis le maintien de l'ordre.

⁴ See No. 249.

⁵ For this draft declaration, see enclosure 2 below, and for Lord Curzon's comments on it, see No. 266 below, n. 5.

Le Président du Conseil Français n'insiste pas sur son projet de réponse à la Délégation du Hedjaz,⁶ qui a été différé jusqu'ici et n'aurait plus aucune portée s'il était remis encore à la fin de Juin, jusqu'à la prochaine conférence; il se confondra d'ailleurs avec la réponse adressée à l'Émir.

⁶ See No. 251, last para.

ENCLOSURE 2 IN NO. 254

Déclaration à l'Émir Feysal

Les Gouvernements français et anglais ont examiné en commun les objections faites par Son Altesse l'Émir Feysal à la récente déclaration par laquelle les deux Puissances Alliées lui avaient confirmé leurs déclarations antérieures relativement à l'indépendance des populations de la Syrie, de la Palestine et de la Mésopotamie, l'avaient informé de la décision prise par la Conférence de la Paix de confier à la France le mandat sur la Syrie et à l'Angleterre le mandat sur la Mésopotamie et sur la Palestine, et l'avaient invité à se rendre à la prochaine session du Conseil Suprême.

Les deux Gouvernements ont également pris connaissance de la protestation de la Délégation du Hedjaz contre la décision de la Conférence de la Paix relative aux mandats, décision qu'elle représente comme négligeant les aspirations des populations et les principes de la guerre et de la déclaration que le Gouvernement de Damas, qui aurait pratiqué une politique de collaboration sincère avec les Alliés et témoigné son entière bonne volonté pour maintenir l'ordre et la sécurité sur son territoire, serait placé dans une situation difficile.

Les objections ainsi formulées ne paraissent nullement justifiées. Il appartient sans contestation possible à la Conférence de la Paix, constituée par l'union des Puissances qui, au prix de sacrifices immenses, ont libéré les peuples asservis, et en particulier les Arabes, de la domination de leurs oppresseurs, de régler les conditions de la paix et de définir le statut et les frontières des États nouveaux.

Les décisions antérieures des Puissances ont proclamé en même temps que leur ferme intention de reconnaître le droit des populations ainsi libérées à se gouverner à titre de nations indépendantes, la nécessité de confier à une puissance mandataire le soin de guider leur administration jusqu'au moment où elles seront capables de la conduire seules: l'article 22 du Pacte de la Société des Nations, contresigné par la Délégation du Hedjaz, enregistre formellement cette règle.

Le chef de la Délégation du Hedjaz, l'Émir Feysal, a si bien reconnu le bien-fondé de ces principes qu'il a de lui-même fait appel à la France pour cette mission dans les termes suivants de l'accord du 6 janvier:

'Le Gouvernement de la République française, se référant d'une part à la déclaration franco-anglaise du 9 novembre 1918, d'autre part aux principes généraux de libération des peuples et de collaboration amicale proclamés par la Conférence de la Paix, confirme sa reconnaissance du

droit des populations de langue arabe, fixées sur le territoire syrien, de toutes confessions, à se réunir pour se gouverner elles-mêmes à titre de nation indépendante.

‘Son Altesse Royale l’Émir Feysal reconnaît que les populations syriennes ont un grand intérêt en raison de la désorganisation résultant de l’oppression turque et des dommages subis pendant la guerre, à demander les conseils et l’aide d’une grande puissance pour réaliser leur unité et organiser le fonctionnement de la nation, conseils et aide qui seront enregistrés par la Société des Nations, lorsque celle-ci sera pratiquement réalisée.

‘Au nom des populations syriennes, c’est à la France qu’il fait appel pour cette mission.’

Il ne saurait donc légitimement protester contre la décision de la Conférence de la Paix.

C’est aux Puissances intéressées, qui ont libéré les Arabes et qui n’ont pas cessé de leur prêter avec le plus grand désintéressement leur appui matériel et moral indispensable, qu’il appartient, au contraire, d’appeler la plus sérieuse attention de la Délégation du Hedjaz et de son chef sur le désordre et l’insécurité maintenue depuis des mois et toujours croissante sur le territoire syrien, sur la collusion d’officiers chérifiens avec des chefs de bandes turcs contre les troupes européennes libératrices et sur la tentative de préjuger des décisions de la Conférence de la Paix en faisant proclamer à Damas un Roi de Syrie par une réunion improvisée sans garanties. Il est évident que les graves inconvénients d’une telle situation ne sauraient se prolonger et que si les autorités arabes de Damas ne voulaient ou ne pouvaient pas maintenir l’ordre et la sécurité sur le territoire, les Puissances mandataires auraient le devoir d’y procéder elles-mêmes pour le bien des populations et la vie de leurs nationaux.

Les deux Puissances alliées renouvellent à Son Altesse l’Émir Feysal leur pressante invitation à se rendre à la prochaine session de la Conférence de la Paix, dans l’espoir que l’avenir des pays arabes pourrait être réglé d’accord avec lui et les malentendus dissipés. Elles ne sauraient, d’ailleurs, lui dissimuler que, faute de se rendre à la cordiale invitation des puissances, il cesserait à leurs yeux de conserver sa position officielle de Délégué du Hedjaz à la Conférence de la Paix.

No. 255

The Emir Feisal to Mr. Lloyd George (Received June 1)¹

Telegraphic [E 5661/2/44]

In continuation of my previous despatch to Field Marshal Lord Allenby respecting the resolution of General Gouraud to send a military expedition to Djabal Amel² I take the opportunity to state that his threats are being

¹ The copy of this telegram received in the Foreign Office from the Prime Minister’s Private Secretary on June 2 bore no number, date, or place of origin.

² Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

executed ruthlessly against the Syrians there. I understand from this despatch received here from there that the French artillery and aeroplanes' explosives are promiscuously and without pity destroying the villages and tearing to pieces the defenceless inhabitants. More than twenty thousand are already left homeless and are dispersed everywhere soliciting help from their compatriots all around while the expedition is still devastating, the sad news being gradually spread in the Houleh and Hauran Districts and it is feared that the whole population of those regions would run at once for the defence of their neighbours and consequently the whole country would be engaged in a fearful struggle which leaves no chance for peace. I have called the attention of General Gouraud to these harsh methods and the great responsibility they entail. As long as he intends to continue carrying out such expeditions my efforts for order and peace would be hampered and it would be very unwise for me to leave Syria and go to Europe. I cannot tell at present to what extent shall my endeavours for order and quietude be successful but I should like to call your Excellency's attention to this critical situation and reaffirm that I lay the responsibility of these sad events on the shoulders of those who are causing them. I do not think that Humanity ever allows a Great Power to look to these events indifferently and I, therefore, invite Your Excellency in the name of humanity and peace to intermeditate and ask the French to stop these harsh methods that if left to continue would evidently ruin the country and exterminate the people. I avail myself of this opportunity to reassure my high consideration.

No. 256

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 6, 5 p.m.)

No. 541 Telegraphic [E 5904/2/44]

CAIRO, June 4, 1920, 12.55 p.m.

Emir Feisal has asked me to send following message from him to Prime Minister.

Translation begins.

To lay stress upon subject of my last telegram¹ I have the honour to inform you that French Military Authorities of Beirut are arming Syrian Christians in Western zone against their Moslem fellow countrymen. You will understand that this will cause serious consequences throughout the country. Not only have Moslems and Christians of Syria always lived like brothers in their common country but they have never forsaken this brotherly life even when, profiting by great war, the Young Turks tried to excite Moslem opinion against Christians. In any case in Eastern zone no animosity appears to have set one against other.

It appears then that bad French Administration is cause of all troubles which exist almost everywhere in Western zone. If then assistance which

¹ Presumably No. 255.

France wishes to give Syria is that of 'divide et impera' we can only refuse it plainly.

I protest against this Bible [*sic*] policy for which henceforward I decline responsibility.

To prevent spread of these troubles throughout the world of Syria I beg you to intercede with French Government to stop arming of Christians referred to and to hand over administration of Syrian coast to Government at Damascus in accordance with decision of Conference at San Remo concerning independence of Syrian States.

Please excuse me if in view of troubles which exist in Western zone and which I fear may spread here I still delay my departure for Europe to assist at Conference which will soon be held in Paris.²

² In a further message to Lord Curzon, conveyed in Cairo telegram No. 547 of June 5 (not printed), the Emir Feisal expressed his fear that 'complete loss of public security throughout Arab country will be result if I leave for west'. He therefore asked Lord Curzon 'whether in the circumstances you consider I should accept invitation and leave country in its present state or whether it would not be preferable for you to send Delegates upon whom you can rely for preliminary discussions . . . '.

No. 257

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 10, 8.50 a.m.)

No. 558 Telegraphic [E 6122/85/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, June 9, 1920, 8.5 p.m.

I have received an urgent letter from Feisal dated May 29th the chief points of which are as follows:—

1. He wishes to know the truth of press statement that Mr. Herbert Samuel has been appointed High Commissioner for Palestine. He goes on to say that this news had had worst possible effect upon Arab population, since Mr. Samuel is universally known to be a Zionist whose ideal is to found a Jewish state upon ruins of a large part of Syria, i.e. Palestine. The Arabs would inevitably regard such an appointment as made at their expense.

In the event of report being true he begs me to urge His Majesty's Government to reverse a decision which vitally affects both interests and *amour propre* of Arab population.

2. He states that existing unrest is increased by the news that sentences passed on Jews convicted in connection with recent disturbances in Jerusalem¹ have been reduced to a far greater extent than those passed upon Moslems and Christians for similar offences.

3. Finally he has been informed, he says, that military authorities in Palestine are allowing Zionists to arm themselves against Moslems, while forbidding latter to provide themselves with arms under penalty of long terms of imprisonment and heavy fines.

¹ See No. 242, n. 5.

I have the necessary material for replying to last two points raised by Feisal but before answering his note I should be glad to be furnished with your views as to terms in which I should reply as regards Mr. Herbert Samuel.

No. 258

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 10, 7.5 p.m.)

No. 559 Telegraphic [E 6227/2/44]

CAIRO, June 9, 1920, 8.10 p.m.

Arab (? Minister for Foreign Affairs) Damascus has forwarded for transmission to His Majesty's Government copies of a telegram from Monsieur Millerand to Emir Feisal received on April 30th and of latter's reply dated May 13th.¹ M. Millerand confirms recognition by French Government of Arab speaking peoples of Syria to govern themselves as independent nations. He points out that these aspirations could not be realized without outside help in view of long oppression from which Syria has suffered and of disorganisation and havoc caused by the war. He adds that France who has been entrusted by Peace Conference with duty of assisting Syria to organise themselves into nations [*sic*] will also guarantee their protection against all outside aggression.

Emir Feisal in his reply takes strong exception to fact that M. Millerand's telegram appears to disregard the unity and indivisibility of Syria and states that its contents have had a deplorable effect and caused great unrest. After dilating upon natural unity of Syria he goes on to refer to communication which he had received from British Government with regard to national home for Jews in Palestine.² This news he states has exasperated Syrian nation even more. Syrians will never agree to handing over of this integral part of their country to Jews. He reminds M. Millerand that previous French Ministry undertook equitable rectification of Syrian frontiers. He points out finally that Syria is already in effect independent and that he wishes only recognition of this fact. The 'assistance' given by France has given rise to so many dangers that he cannot recognize San Remo decisions. He would however be prepared to treat with French Government regarding form of this assistance provided negotiations were based on a recognition of independence and indivisibility of Syria.

Full text by bag.¹

¹ Not printed. These copies were transmitted to Lord Curzon under cover of Lord Allenby's despatch No. 644 of June 14, received June 22.

² See No. 244.

No. 259

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 522 Telegraphic [E 6001/169/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 9, 1920, 9 p.m.*

I am very much concerned at what has happened with reference to Feisal's subsidy.

Telegraphic correspondence with War Office shows that His Majesty's Government have on more than one occasion issued definite orders that payments from beginning of present year were not to be made without direct sanction from Foreign Office, who have to provide the money and to defend it in Parliament. Object of withholding the subsidy was twofold: (1) Because Arab forces were and are still engaged in acts of open warfare with British troops, and (2) In order to put pressure upon Feisal to accept invitation of Supreme Council to Europe.

Nevertheless on June 2nd, we learned from telegram from General Headquarters, Egypt,¹ that payment of arrears for January and February, amounting to £100,000, had been made. This appears to have been in direct contravention of Government orders and would require very exceptional circumstances to justify it.² It places us in very difficult position with French Government, to whom we have given repeated assurances that the payment had not been and would not be made.

I shall be glad if you can send me a full explanation for Cabinet. No action should in any circumstances be taken as regards further payments, now urged for March, April and May.

¹ Only a paraphrase (not printed) of this telegram, No. 645 G.P. of June 2 from G.H.Q. Egypt to the War Office, has been traced in Foreign Office archives.

² In his telegram No. (R.) 7155 of June 14 to the Secretary of State for India (not printed) the Civil Commissioner at Baghdad, on the assumption that the payment had not been approved by H.M.G., begged 'to protest most strongly against payment of further sums to a Government which has maintained a state of war with British troops in Mesopotamia without cessation since last October'.

No. 260

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 528 Telegraphic [E 6100/95/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 11, 1920, 2 p.m.*

Serious attack upon Telafar reported to have been led by Sheriffian officers, and other incidents on Upper Tigris and Euphrates increase the apprehensions expressed in my telegram No. 522¹ as to policy of subsidising Feisal at this juncture. It appears to me on the contrary that urgent representations should at once be addressed to Feisal and if you think proper to King of Hejaz also pointing out serious view taken by His Majesty's Government of these lamentable events, and calling for condign punishment of responsible persons.

¹ No. 259.

No. 261

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 534 Telegraphic [E 6122/85/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 14, 1920, 2.30 p.m.*

Your No. 558.¹

You should reply to Feisal as follows:—

‘Appointment of Mr. Samuel as High Commissioner for Palestine has been decided upon by His Majesty’s Government because they are convinced that his high reputation and administrative experience render him peculiarly qualified for the task and because his authority with the Zionists, coupled with his well known sympathy for the Arabs, will enable him to hold scales even, and to exercise a pacifying and moderating influence at the outset of new system of civil administration. Mr. Samuel is about to make a public statement of views and intentions with which he goes out to Palestine which will be telegraphed to you for transmission to Feisal, whom it should fully reassure.² Mr. Samuel will seek an early opportunity after his arrival in the country of communicating with the Emir with a view to removing any remaining sources of misunderstanding. We believe that the Emir and the Arabs will find in him a sincere friend.’³

You will doubtless reply to last two points in telegram yourself.

¹ No. 257.

² For this statement see *The Times*, June 14, p. 13.

³ In his telegram No. 569 of June 24 to Lord Allenby for the Emir Feisal (not printed) Lord Curzon informed the Emir that ‘Sir Herbert Samuel is authorised to communicate with Your Highness on all questions affecting his duties, and has been instructed to refer to His Majesty’s Government such local questions as Your Highness may desire to raise. In view, however, of the close connection between Your Highness and Field-Marshal Lord Allenby . . . His Majesty’s Government will always be ready to communicate with Your Highness through him, when the occasion arises.’ Mr. Samuel had been knighted on June 12.

No. 262

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 539 Telegraphic [E 5529/4164/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 15, 1920, 1.15 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 537.¹

Prime Minister desires reply in my immediately succeeding telegram² to be communicated to King Hussein.

¹ Of June 3, not printed. This had reported difficulties that had arisen in the British control of quarantine at Jeddah and the uncompromising attitude of King Hussein, who had ‘written that it is useless to discuss question until he gets a reply from Mr. Lloyd George to his telegram [King Hussein’s No. 505 handed to H.M. representative at Jeddah on May 19 and transmitted to Lord Curzon in Cairo telegram No. 526 of May 30, not printed] explaining his inability to manage the affairs of the country and asking for a reconsideration of Arab situation.’

² No. 263.

No. 263

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 540 Telegraphic [E 5529/4164/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 15, 1920, 1.45 p.m.*

I have received Your Majesty's telegrams of May 23rd¹ and May 30th.² As Your Majesty is aware, the Peace Conference has recognised the principle of independence for the Arab countries freed from the domination of the Turks, and has conferred the Mandate for Palestine upon His Majesty's Government, and that for Syria upon France, to enable them to receive the help necessitated by the exhaustion, and the disturbed conditions following upon the war. Your Majesty is also aware that the Hedjaz, a member of the League of Nations,³ is to be entirely independent.

With regard to the invitation to the Emir Feisal to proceed to Europe, this invitation was issued by the Peace Conference and not by His Majesty's Government and I am therefore not competent to answer Your Majesty about it. There is no question of His Majesty's Government departing from the obligations into which it has entered, or from the attitude of friendly co-operation which has hitherto characterised the relations between Your Majesty and His Majesty's Government.

¹ In this telegram, addressed to the Prime Minister, King Hussein referred to the invitation to the Emir Feisal to visit Europe and said: 'if this invitation is concerning Syria it is known that its people made a conference which decided that the situation of the Government will be on the shape of councils and delegations. Under this case and circumstances he has no way for proceeding and speaking about Syria and this is well known to you. If the invitation is concerning Hedjaz I have already stated in my wire to you Number 505 dated 29 8 1338 [May 19, 1920, see No. 262, n. 1] the thing which makes us hesitate in that case. If the invitation is concerning Faisal himself I have the honour to inform you that not only Faisal but we all are ready to attend if invited for the point you wish please accept my best respectful regards.'

² i.e. King Hussein's No. 505 referred to in n. 1 above.

³ Although formal admission to the Peace Conference had entitled the Hedjaz to become an original member of the League of Nations, its membership never became effective owing to the refusal of King Hussein to ratify the Covenant.

No. 264

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon

(Received June 17, 2.30 p.m.)

No. 582 Telegraphic [E 6655/95/44]

CAIRO, *June 16, 1920, 8.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 528.¹

Military Authorities have addressed representations in the sense you desire to Feisal.

I do not propose to make any to Hussein. He could do nothing and it is undesirable to recognize his claim to be concerned in affairs in Syria and Mesopotamia.

¹ No. 260.

No. 265

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 20, 6 p.m.)

No. 599 Telegraphic [E 6781/2/44]

CAIRO, June 19, 1920, 10.45 a.m.

Following from Faisal for you.

Begins.

Your Lordship,

I was greatly surprised to hear of armistice between French and the Turks under Mustapha Kemal¹ which leaves greater part of Northern Syria and Cilicia to Turks. This armistice which is followed by such a marked retreat, even before ratification of Treaty of Peace by Turks, will be the commencement of a series of defeats in Near East in which not only French but all of Allies will be involved and will shortly menace peace of Mesopotamia, Mosul and other places. Consequently desire of Turks to extend their domination towards the South will be strengthened and sphere of their influence, both actual and moral, will be overwhelming. All these things add to gravity of situation and give rise to difficulties which prejudice conclusion of possible permanent peace. The weak policy of a demoralized East and their neglect of the Arab friendship, which I, according to Your Lordship's exhortations, extended to them, have led to this grave consequence.

The concentration of French troops which have evacuated Cilicia and Syria leads one to believe their Commander in Chief intends to find some excuse for starting military operations against my Government in Damascus, and to inflict deep injuries upon it, though it is the friend of your noble Government. Undoubtedly these measures of the French Commander can be considered as being favourable to our common enemy and will consequently strengthen ambition of Mustapha Kemal and those who are behind him.

I therefore wish to draw the attention of British Government to seriousness of situation which if neglected may have grave consequences to Arab country where British interests, both there and throughout the East, will be seriously menaced.

According to Your Lordship's direct and indirect advice, I have offered my hand in friendship to French, and I tender it likewise to your Government, hoping efficient steps will be taken to safeguard my country from impending danger.

I anxiously await Your Lordship's early reply to this letter and take this opportunity to renew to Your Lordship the expression of my faithful friendship towards your country.

Dated June 5th.

Ends.

¹ This twenty days' armistice had been signed on May 30 and came into operation on June 1. Cf. Nos. 75 and 76.

*Lord Hardinge to Earl Curzon (Boulogne)*¹

No. 1 Telegraphic [E 6781/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 21, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Feisal's message to you repeated in Allenby's telegram No. 599,² and Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 62.³ Papers containing draft telegram to Feisal and draft reply to French have been sent to Boulogne in case you may wish to take the opportunity of discussing the question there. In view of Feisal's reported visit to Aleppo to meet Mustapha Kemal's emissaries,⁴ and his obvious distrust of French intentions there appears to be some danger of his joining hands with Turkish nationalists unless he is reassured without delay.

Would it be possible to obtain assurances from the French Minister for Foreign Affairs to show Feisal that he need not fear unprovoked attack by the French?⁵

¹ Lord Curzon was attending the First Inter-Allied Conference at Boulogne, June 21–22, for which see Vol. VIII, Chap. V.

² No. 265.

³ Of June 17, not printed. Mr. Wratislaw was H.M. Consul-General at Beirut.

⁴ This was reported in Mr. Wratislaw's telegram No. 62 referred to above. For secret negotiations earlier in 1920 between two prominent Syrians and representatives of Mustapha Kemal in Constantinople, see Zeine N. Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence* (Beirut, 1960), p. 147, n. 2. For references to other contacts between Syrian and Turkish Nationalists, see Elie Kedourie, *England and the Middle East* (London, 1956), pp. 170–2.

⁵ Lord Curzon minuted as follows:

'I had a talk about this matter with M. Berthelot [Secretary-General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs] at Boulogne. He asked me if I had not assented to the draft joint message to Feisal [see enclosure 2 in No. 254]. I told him that I objected to it because

(1) it contained references to a French document of which we knew nothing.

(2) it contained threats that might commit us to military action.

(3) it was conceived exclusively in the interests of France.

'Our concern with Feisal was I said a different matter

(a) we wanted to settle with him the boundaries of Palestine

(b) we desired him to come to Europe. But it seemed to be useless to persevere in a request which had been twice ignored.

'In these circs. I thought that we had better deal with him alone and that if the French had difficulties with him arising out of their mandate they should solve them independently. M. Berthelot implored me not to desist from joint action and asked me to wait until he submitted to me a fresh proposition in that sense.

'I assented.

'He knew all about Feisal's visit to Aleppo but denied that it had anything to do with a *rapprochement* with Mustapha Kemal. C 22/6.'

Letter from Mr. Vansittart¹ (Paris) to Major Young (Received June 23)

[E 7033/4164/44]

Confidential

PARIS, June 21, 1920

My dear Young,

Thanks for your letter.¹

I should have reported sooner but for the very difficult situation I find myself in here, and which makes cautious going necessary. You will have seen that the French Press and Chamber are echoing with shrieks of 'Mossoulisme'.² Everyone is very excited, an anti-British atmosphere has been worked up, and Berthelot has been 'sur la sellette'³ under public examination. In these circumstances it is very difficult to obtain further 'concessions'—which is the word that would be applied here (1) to the Arabian chapter⁴ (2) to the eastern Palestine frontier (3) to the division of the Litani water. Berthelot I have found as usual very sensible and friendly, but too rattled just at present to be easily brought to face further 'concessions'—at least as regards (2) and (3) which is all I have felt opportune to try on him at present. As regards (2) I fear, as I have always feared, that we may have let the psychological moment slip. I would like to have struck sooner—immediately after San Remo, where I got a very favourable atmosphere. I may still succeed with (2). If I don't, the Jews will have to lump it. *We* can give them the Meinertzhagen line⁵ south of the Sykes-Picot line, and, if I can't move the French, they must be content with that. With the question of the Yarmuk valley, I deal later on in this letter. As regards (3)—the distribution of the water—I foresee a sharp tussle, and am getting the engineers employed by the Zionists to come out at the end of this week.

Now, as regards Arabia and the Mandates. My intention had been to begin with the former, especially as the latter were not officially 'through' the Cabinet when I left. But in view of the situation I found here, I felt it prudent to reverse my tactics, and to try to create an atmosphere of friendliness and conciliation in beginning with the least contentious part—the mandates.

I have accordingly had several meetings on them. I was careful to explain that our discussions must be unofficial and confidential so long as the Cabinet had not finally approved the text, but that I thought we could make

¹ Mr. R. G. Vansittart, temporarily head of the Political Section of the British Peace Delegation, was now working upon the delimitation of the boundaries of Syria and Palestine. Major Young's letter is untraced in Foreign Office archives.

² The reference is to M. Clemenceau's verbal agreement in Dec. 1918 to the transference to the British sphere of influence of the district of Mosul, which, by the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 had been allotted to the French sphere of interest. See Vol. IV, Chap. II, Introduction (p. 251).

³ 'On the mat.'

⁴ i.e. the settlement of the future of the Arabian Peninsula (excluding the Hedjaz), to which Turkey would renounce 'all rights and title' by Article 132 of the Treaty of Sèvres.

⁵ For a map showing this line, see Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary*, 1917-1956, p. 64. Cf. No. 210.

considerable progress *en attendant*. (Please let me know when the Cabinet has definitely passed them.) I also explained that the draft Mesopotamian mandate was 'for information', but that I should be interested to hear any views the French might wish to express on the Palestine mandate.

They like the Mesopotamian mandate. Berthelot said that with very few and slight modifications it would serve for Syria. (I always expected this.) He asked me to go through both mandates with him clause by clause this week on his return from Boulogne.⁶ What with that and his 'examination' it has been difficult to get him on to detail these last days.

As to the Palestine mandate he said that Millerand had nearly jumped out of his skin when he had shown it to him. Berthelot added that, frankly, he himself was both surprised and alarmed by it. They both think it much too judaised and judaising—full of red flags indeed. Berthelot said, however, that if we liked to run ourselves into trouble, that seemed to him our affair, and spoke as if he hoped to get M. Millerand to adopt this view and to leave him (Berthelot) to agree with me. He asked for a little more time to study it, and I am to meet him again when he comes back from Boulogne. I have not discouraged him from offering observations on the *Palestine* mandate, for this reason. You will remember that you toned down the first draft, and I toned it down still further. If it should be watered a bit more (there are some in the Cabinet like Mr. Montagu who may press for this), it will ease our position, *vis-à-vis* of the Zionists, in having had the French urge us however mildly. If this is astute, it is quite legitimate. To the Zionists I have always taken the line that the modifications would have to go beyond yours—they have not yet seen mine—but that, so long as there were no *prohibitive* clauses in the mandate it didn't much matter: it was easier to do things without flagging them too much beforehand.

I will report further at the end of this week. You will see that, except for the mandates, I am rather up against it here. The most hopeful feature is the Arabian chapter. I have spent this week preparing the ground without actually producing the text—rather successfully so far, as the last time I alluded to this forthcoming chapter as being the development of the *Projet d'arrangement* of October 1917,⁷ Berthelot spoke as if that was very natural and he hoped to make no difficulty. He hasn't yet seen the text though! He will on Wednesday,⁸ and I expect something of a duel, but am fairly hopeful. Don't hurry me though. I have deliberately postponed the Arabian chapter till after the Boulogne meeting, hoping that that will have created a better atmosphere. If soft sawder can succeed, *I* shall. I regard the Arabian chapter as the most important part of this job. I hope you all agree in this. And don't press me too much about Armenians in Cilicia. The Embassy turned me on to your telegram No. 711 of June 17th.⁹ The interview began

⁶ See No. 266, n. 1.

⁷ See Vol. IV, No. 404 (p. 603).

⁸ June 23.

⁹ In this telegram (not printed) Sir G. Grahame had been instructed to 'endeavour to obtain full details of results of negotiations with Mustafa Kemal intended to ensure safety of Armenians and in general of arrangements made by the French for their protection'.

badly with a short answer that it was a military matter with which they must be left to deal and that if they weren't omnipotent in Cilicia neither were we in Ismid (This was Kammerer,¹⁰ not Berthelot). It ended well however. The answers to your questions are that a considerable number of Armenians have followed the French, and they are doing all that is possible at great cost for the comfort and maintenance of refugees: that in regard to those left behind assurances of their safety have been sought of Mustapha Kemal, and that French officers are being left behind to settle things down; and that a good number of the Armenians now had arms. Berthelot added he hoped we realised the Armenians were much to blame: they had increased French difficulties by scuppering isolated Turks whenever and wherever they got a chance.

I think Lord Curzon should see this letter. I'm sorry it is so long, but it's got to be longer. You've 'asked for it' in yours.

I enclose two draft articles¹¹ dealing with two subjects that must be tackled, and tackled separately from the mandates, in an agreement with the French (If the French will not agree to deal with the Litani waters in the Palestine mandate that also must form part of the same separate instrument.)

These two subjects are (1) the conservation of the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, (2) the Palestine-Mesopotamia Railway. In each case the relevant portion of the Sykes-Picot Agreement is quoted with the new article proposed.

With regard to (1) it would be well to have the views of Garbett and Gribbon¹² as to whether it is adequate. It may be thought that the draft article is not detailed enough: but I don't think the French will go into more just now, and events may moreover well prove that they are not the real people for us to deal with in this matter. As far as I know the subject is perhaps not of immediate importance as the Turks tried, and failed, to interfere with both water supplies during the war. But I think we should have something of this nature on record in order to tidy the question up temporarily.

With regard to (2) I enclose in illustration the original signed Sykes-Picot map, which please do not fail to return.¹³ It seems to show quite clearly that the Trans-Jordan portion of the Haifa-Deraa railway is in the French sphere. In the present French mood, and in view of the pressure now being put on the Government, I doubt if I shall get the French to do much more than agree to the draft article submitted. Even at San Remo they only spoke of an 'arrangement'. I shall of course have a solid try for the Yarmuk valley, but we must be prepared to fall back on something. It would perhaps be helpful to have Gribbon out here when we come to this point, and he had

¹⁰ M. Albert Kammerer, head of the Eastern department in the French Foreign Office, had been a member of the French delegation at the San Remo Conference at which the questions of Armenia and Cilicia had been discussed. For Turkish Nationalist pressure in the Ismid region, see Nos. 79, 83, 84, 86-93.

¹¹ Not printed.

¹² Mr. C. C. Garbett, an Assistant Secretary in the India Office, and Lt.-Col. W. H. Gribbon, a British military expert at the San Remo Conference.

¹³ This map was returned on July 1. It is not preserved on this file.

better coincide with Mance¹⁴ who will be back here on Thursday or Friday. In any case I should like to know the net result up to date of the Trans-Jordan surveys that have been going on with a view to finding out whether any other route is practical for our pipeline and railway except the Yarmuk valley.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT VANSITTART

P.S. In the final text of the Palestine mandate the frontiers must be put in, including the frontier with Egypt. South of the Yarmuk valley I propose to lay it down as the Meinertzhagen line. (I enclose a copy of that line. Please return it.)¹⁵ I think we had much better settle that question definitely and have a Palestine without further discussion with the Arabs, which the French would hate and which, as regards the Arabs, would only delay matters without any corresponding advantage. If this view and proposal is approved, it would be well for Gribbon to bring or send out from the Geographical Section of the War Office a technical description of the Meinertzhagen frontiers. (North of the Yarmuk it will be for me to define them with the French.) Sir H. Samuel in a letter to Lord Curzon, annexed,¹⁶ considers this line acceptable. He wants in addition (a) Petra. I don't think this matters much one way or the other. If Gribbon sees no objection it might be included. It would be better looked after than at present, (b) a few miles more south and east of Akabah. This might be granted, and the line slightly modified at its extremity, but the Admiralty would have to be consulted.¹⁷

¹⁴ Brig.-Gen. H. O. Mance, head of the Transportation and Communications Section of the British Delegation in Paris.

¹⁵ A note on the file copy reads: 'Returned 12/7/20'. The document is not preserved on this file. Cf. n. 5 above.

¹⁶ Not printed.

¹⁷ In an undated minute Lord Curzon wrote: 'I am quite willing to water the Palestine mandate, which I cordially distrust. C.'

No. 268

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received June 24, 7 p.m.)

No. 616 Telegraphic [E 7174/2/44]

CAIRO, June 23, 1920, 1.10 p.m.

My telegram No. 558 of June 9th.¹

I have received two letters from Feisal at Damascus.²

1. In first, dated June 7th, is enclosed copy of correspondence of General Gouraud. It appears that Feisal recently presented him with formal declaration for signature on behalf of French Government drafted at

¹ No. 257.

² Copies of these letters (not printed) were received in the Foreign Office on July 6 as enclosures in Cairo despatch No. 698 of June 23.

Damascus and purporting to be a *modus vivendi* within terms of San Remo decision. By it French recognition of Feisal's sovereignty should await impending remonstrance in Paris: on the other hand French authorities should be prepared after friendly discussion to hand over to Syrian Government all the areas at present occupied by their troops with the exception of Lebanon. Finally French Government should expect Arab Government to unite with it against common enemy. In reply, General Gouraud refused to sign such a document without referring to French Government who had, he said, made their position quite clear by their recent proclamation to which they would probably have nothing to add. In forwarding this correspondence, Feisal asks to be excused if recent behaviour of French authorities and in particular their agreement with Mustapha Kemal has made him suspicious of their *bona fide[s]*.

He states finally that he does not desire to go to Paris until he has received instructions from His Majesty's Government as to his duty with regard both to French zone and to Mesopotamia and Syria in general.³

2. In his second letter, dated June 10th, he re-emphasizes his opinion that persistence of French in their present policy aided by Great Britain from motives of sincere friendship is reducing Arabia to anarchy. News of armistice with Mustapha Kemal⁴ has come upon his people like a thunderbolt, he says, and has greatly damaged his prestige. He has since had to suppress several local newspapers and to banish a number of people who have been shown sympathetic to Turks.

(? The) danger, he states, is imminent since Turkish forces have already crossed frontier. He ends with a strong reaffirmation of his friendship . . .⁵ (? The) full text of these letters follows by bag.²

In acknowledging them I have confined myself to an undertaking that I will communicate their contents to His Majesty's Government at first possible opportunity.

³ Cf. No. 256, n. 2.

⁴ Cf. No. 265.

⁵ The text is here uncertain.

No. 269

Sir H. Samuel to Earl Curzon (Received July 2)¹

Unnumbered [E 7569/85/44]

ROME,² June 26, 1920

My Lord,

In view of the possibility that I may have an opportunity of discussing with the Emir Feisal the lines on which a settlement might be effected of the matters in which the Palestine Administration and himself are jointly concerned, it seems desirable that the terms which such settlement might include, should now be considered somewhat more closely than has hitherto

¹ Date of filing in the Foreign Office. A copy was sent to Lord Curzon at Spa on July 3.

² Sir H. Samuel was on his way to Palestine; see No. 261. He arrived in Jerusalem on June 30.

been the case. The following principles might perhaps form the basis upon which an agreement might be reached.

1. His Majesty's Government would be prepared to recognise the sovereignty of Feisal simultaneously with its recognition by the French Government.

2. The boundaries between the Arab State and Palestine would begin at the Southern boundary of the French Zone and would follow generally the line proposed by Colonel Meinertzhagen to the War Office.

3. The Palestine Administration would at once provide the Arab Administration with a capital sum of an amount to be determined. This amount would have relation to the share, estimated to be due to the Damascus Government, in the Customs Revenue collected at Haifa. The Palestine Administration will shortly be contracting a loan for purposes of Railway and other development. Revenues are available to pay Interest and Sinking Fund on such a loan. It might borrow in addition whatever amount could be secured, as to Interest and Sinking Fund by the estimated minimum of the Revenue, collected at Haifa, properly belonging to the Damascus Government. This arrangement would provide that Government with a capital sum for development, of which it stands in urgent need, without imposing any charge upon the Taxpayer, either of the United Kingdom or of Palestine. It would probably go far to secure the assent of the Arab Government to the political provisions in the proposed Settlement, particularly that relating to the Trans-Jordanian Boundary, which will probably give rise to difficulty, unless there is some *quid pro quo*.

4. The proportion of the Customs Revenue collected by the Government of Palestine, which equitably belongs to the Government of Damascus, to be estimated from time to time by a Commission consisting of two representatives of each of those Governments, with a chairman agreed upon by them, or, failing agreement, nominated by the Council of the League of Nations. Any surplus remaining, after providing for the service of the Loan previously referred to, would be payable annually to the Damascus Government.

5. The continuance of the remaining portion of the payments made, until recently, to the Damascus Government by way of subsidy, will need consideration.

6. The Palestine Government to undertake to pay to the Hejjaz Railway Administration an annual sum representing the actual physical value of the Haifa-Deraa Railway. Such value to be assessed by the Commission above referred to.

7. The Arab Government to enjoy the fullest facilities at the Port of Haifa and on the Haifa-Deraa Railway for its commerce and for all purposes of transit.

8. It may be found possible to offer to the Arab Government the right of nominating one of the members of the body which will control the Mahommedan Holy Places in Palestine.

I should be glad to know for my guidance how far these suggestions meet with your approval.

I have, &c.,
HERBERT SAMUEL

No. 270

*Sir H. Samuel to Earl Curzon (Received July 5)*¹

Unnumbered [E 7667/2/44]

ROME, June 26, 1920

My Lord,

I saw M. Millerand at Boulogne on June 21st, and spoke to him about the desirability from the Palestinian point of view of arriving at a settlement with Emir Feisal. M. Millerand immediately complained of what he termed Feisal's unreliability; he was playing a double game and showed no disposition to come to a settlement and, at the moment, was causing much difficulty by refusing to agree to French occupation of certain Railways, which the British had occupied and which were necessary to France and which Feisal had recently agreed that they should have. M. Millerand said emphatically 'Je me chargerai de Feisal, moi'. He expressed the hope that any communication which I might have with Feisal should pass, as far as possible, through General Gouraud; otherwise the Arabs would play off the British against the French, and it was necessary to show that the two countries were interlocked. I said that I hoped to get into touch with General Gouraud. M. Millerand said that he hoped I should do so. He said that I should find Gouraud conciliatory and helpful.

M. Berthelot, whom I saw immediately afterwards, also expressed no special desire to come to an understanding with Feisal and said it was necessary to adopt there a policy which was 'très claire et très nette'.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT SAMUEL

¹ Date of filing in the Foreign Office. Major Young minuted: 'This went to Spa on the 3rd July.'

No. 271

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received June 30, 11.20 a.m.)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 7455/2/44]

PARIS, June 29, 1920, 7.10 p.m.

Your telegram June 28th.¹

Following from Vansittart.

I have seen Monsieur Berthelot who said he was writing note to Your Lordship which would be ready by to-morrow. He went on to say at some length that French Government were leaving us alone in Mesopotamia and Palestine, even to extent of making no difficulties about terms of Palestine Mandate, and that they expect as much of us in Syria; however they considered time for joint action in regard to Feisal was over and that further

¹ Not printed. A note on the file copy explains that it was 'asking for an answer from the French, as verbally promised by M. Berthelot to Lord Curzon, about our relations with Feisal'. Cf. No. 266, n. 5.

communication to him should be from them alone, if they thought fit to communicate with him further; for Feisal was trying to 'drive them into the sea' and had moreover not come to Conference, as invited, to regularize his position, and French Government therefore were not bound to recognize him or have him 'Impose upon them'. I expect that contents of promised note will be somewhat to above effect.²

² This note dated June 29 was in fact a semi-official communication addressed to Mr. Vansittart personally. It read as follows:

'Mon cher Collègue et ami,

'Vous avec [? avez] bien voulu me communiquer divers projets concernant les relations entre les zones de mandat français et anglais en Orient, les mandats anglais en Mésopotamie et Palestine, ainsi qu'une demande étendue relative à la péninsule arabique.

'Toutes ces démarches tendent à achever de résoudre les diverses questions qui intéressent l'Empire britannique dans cette partie du monde.

'J'ai communiqué à M. Millerand ces divers documents et il vous serait obligé de faire connaître à Lord Curzon qu'avant d'y répondre le Gouvernement français juge essentiel de demander que l'on résolve également et d'une manière complète les questions qui intéressent la situation de la France en Syrie et sur lesquelles un malentendu semble persister entre le Gouvernement français et le Gouvernement anglais.

'Il ne saurait, en effet, être question de répondre en ce qui concerne notamment les mandats britanniques avant d'être assuré d'une manière précise qu'il ne peut plus être question pour les autorités britanniques de continuer à intervenir dans la zone française.

'Le mandat français sur la Syrie doit être aussi libre de toute hypothèque et condition que le mandat britannique en Mésopotamie. Nous n'avons jamais eu l'idée de nous mêler du régime qui serait donné à la Mésopotamie sous le mandat anglais, ni de savoir quelles seraient les autorités indigènes que l'Angleterre chargerait d'administrer directement le pays. Nous sommes en droit de prétendre à la réciprocité et de ne pas voir des autorités anglaises s'interposer entre nous et l'Emir Feysal.

'C'est pour bien établir cette situation que nous avons accepté la proposition de Lord Curzon de faire une dernière déclaration commune à Feysal, par l'entremise du Général Gouraud, pour convaincre l'Emir de l'accord des deux Gouvernements et tenter une dernière explication avec lui. Son attitude constante, son abstention à la Conférence, les déclarations de l'Emir Hussein ne permettent plus de lui adresser la déclaration prévue.

'L'examen en commun des projets que le Gouvernement anglais nous soumet pour les présenter d'accord à la Ligue des Nations rend urgent l'établissement d'une situation aussi nette pour la France que pour l'Angleterre, le mandat de l'une ne pouvant rester en suspens alors que le mandat de l'autre serait déterminé.

'Veuillez croire, mon cher Collègue et ami, à mes sentiments les meilleurs.

BERTHELOT'

No. 272

Letter from Mr. Vansittart (Paris) to Major Young (Received July 2)

[E 7533/4164/44]

PARIS, June 29, 1920

My dear Young,

A line to keep you *au courant* of what is going on here. I hope to write more fully later.

Berthelot is rather hard to get hold of, and even when one has got hold of him M. Millerand's present frame of mind doesn't make his subordinates

any easier to deal with. I have, however, had several meetings since I last wrote and have made some progress.

1. *Mandates*

I told you in my last letter¹ that the French liked the Mesopotamian model but there might be some difficulty about the Palestine one. I hope, however, that we may now have got over that. I cannot yet take my meeting this morning with Berthelot² as conclusive, but I trust the matter may now take the form of the French merely offering observations without any insistence, we being free to make any modification in the text or not, as we desire. But when are our Cabinet going to pass the text finally? Please refer to my last letter. Please let me know this when you can. I can hardly put the thing through *definitely* here till I am informed of that.

The mandates have now also been shown to the Italians. They will defer official comment till the document is official (i.e. till our Cabinet have passed it) but in general their attitude will be that of the French; i.e. they think us foolish and asking for trouble, but that is our affair. I think we may take it that they will not press any objection. Galli³ remarked to me this morning that he could not understand why we could not do things without talking about them so much. (This has always been my view and I have tried to impress it on the Zionists when preparing them for reductions of the original mandate.) Galli instanced Article 5 of the Palestine mandate⁴ as a particularly glaring instance. He thought there would be lots of trouble if it stood in its present form, and not much if we left it out but acted as if it was there. He will be quite easy to deal with when you tell me I can take the text as passed by our Cabinet.

2. *Arabian Chapter* (copy as put forward enclosed)⁵

Millerand has jumped about that too. An initial spasm or two we must however be prepared for. He is showing a desire—for which I was somewhat prepared—to try to link it up with Tangier. That will be sternly discouraged.

¹ No. 267.

² See No. 271.

³ Signor C. Galli, member of the Italian delegation to 1920 Inter-Allied Conferences.

⁴ This paragraph read:

'An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body with power to advise and co-operate with the Administration of Palestine in all economic, social and other matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country. It shall have a preferential right, upon fair and equitable terms, to construct or operate public works, services and utilities, and to develop the natural resources of the country, in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration. No profits distributed by such agency, directly or indirectly, shall exceed a reasonable rate of interest on the capital, and any further profits shall be utilised by it for the benefit of the country in a manner approved by His Britannic Majesty's Government.'

'The Zionist Organisation shall be recognized as such agency. It shall take steps, in consultation with the mandatory, to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish National Home.'

⁵ Enclosure 1 below.

I hope to get over this fence. Berthelot and Kammerer are both quite reasonable at present. I have talked to them hard for two consecutive days. Millerand began that way about the Palestine mandate, but Berthelot has, I think, now been able to overcome that, and I hope to be able to prime him sufficiently to reach a similar result over Arabia. I will report more fully as soon as I can. So far I have not been able to clinch it and must just peg away.

3. *Palestine water*

I have communicated the Zionist desideratum to the French and put it in the most favourable light possible. I doubt whether the Zionist text will get through in its present form (annexed);⁶ but I may be able to get an undertaking in more general form.

4. *Frontiers of Palestine*

Here there is going to be a real snag. The French maintain that the line sketched by Berthelot was never a definite offer as it was subject to the approval of Millerand, which was never given. They have now put forward a distinctly less satisfactory line (though of course it includes Banias and Metullah). I will, however, report on this fully to-morrow or the next day—or so soon as I can get out of them a map in illustration of their proposal.⁷ They have sent me a very categorical note by Millerand on the subject, but as some of the places mentioned in it don't appear in our maps, the note is not clear or of much use without a map in illustration. The French said to me that we had let the moment pass when they could have made further concessions to us here without exciting attention. They didn't really very much care, but Chamber and press here were now in such a state that they simply dared not go further and that we must take account of the position in which they found themselves. (I rather feared delay might prejudice things here. If I had been able to strike sooner after San Remo I am sure I could have got the whole Berthelot line in the north and the Meinertzhagen line in the east.) More of this later. I am continuing to press the Zionist claim as best I can.

5. *The Yarmuk Valley*

I have not heard from you whether Mance or Gribbon are coming out. So as not to lose time, therefore, I have tentatively put forward to Berthelot the text enclosed in my last letter,⁸ explaining of course it is only a suggestion of mine and has not the sanction of my Government. I added that I thought between us we could devise something better; and from to-day's conversation with Berthelot I have some hope of getting him to move that way. He is much inclined to; again it is a question of shifting Millerand. I shall try to develop this opening and will report later.

⁶ Enclosure 2 below.

⁷ In a letter of June 30 to Major Young (not printed) Mr. Vansittart transmitted the latest proposals and a map on which the various suggested boundary lines were marked.

⁸ See No. 267, n. 11.

Meanwhile you might let me know what is thought of the text in my last letter as a *pis aller*.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT VANSITTART

ENCLOSURE I IN No. 272

PROJET DE TRAITÉ RELATIF A LA
PÉNINSULE ARABE
(SOUMIS PAR LA DÉLÉGATION
BRITANNIQUE).

Preamble

Article 1

Les hautes parties contractantes reconnaissent l'indépendance de la péninsule Arabe de toute domination étrangère, et déclarent qu'elles ne recherchent aucune extension territoriale dans ladite péninsule.

Article 2

Aux fins du présent traité, la péninsule Arabe comprend: (1) Tous les territoires autres que ceux du royaume du Hedjaz et du protectorat britannique d'Aden et de la zone territoriale qui l'entoure; et (2) les îles comprises dans la ligne mentionnée plus loin, que ces îles aient déjà été soumises à la dominion turque ou non.

Cette ligne s'étend depuis:

(a) La limite entre l'Arabie et l'Égypte au fond du golfe d'Akaba; latitude approximative 29° 27' Nord longitude 34° 56' Est (Carte No. 8 bis de l'Amirauté britannique) se dirigeant vers:

(b) l'extrémité occidentale du récif qui s'étend à l'ouest depuis l'île de Tiran:

(c) de là jusqu'aux rochers Sud-Ouest à la hauteur des îles de la Grande Hanish, latitude approxima-

PROPOSALS OF BRITISH DELEGATION
FOR DRAFT TREATY DEALING WITH
THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ARABIAN
PENINSULA.

Preamble

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties recognise the independence from external domination of the Peninsula of Arabia, as defined in Article 2, and declare that they seek no territorial aggrandisement for themselves in the said Peninsula.

Article 2

For the purpose of this treaty the Arabian Peninsula includes (1) all territories other than those of the Kingdom of the Hejaz and the British Protectorate over Aden and its surrounding territorial zone, and (2) the islands, whether previously Turkish or not, which lie within the line which is defined hereafter.

This line extends from:

(a) The boundary line between Arabia and Egypt at the head of the Gulf of Akaba, approximate latitude 29° 27' N., longitude 34° 56' E. (British Admiralty Chart No. 8A), to

(b) The western extremity of the reef extending westwards from the island of Tiran; then to

(c) The south-west rocks off Great Hanish Islands, approximate latitude 13° 39' N. longitude 42° 35' E.

tive 13° 39' Nord, longitude 42° 35' Est (carte No. 2523 de l'Amirauté britannique); depuis là, en coupant le point à l'extrême Sud-Ouest de Scheik Malu à la hauteur du cap Bab-el-Mandeb;

(d) de là, depuis la ligne contour-nante de 100 brasses de profondeur dans le golfe d'Aden, latitude approximative 12° 29' Nord, longitude 43° 36' Est (carte No. 2523 de l'Amirauté britannique); et de là on [*sic*] suivant cette ligne, telle qu'elle est indiquée sur la carte No. 1012 de l'Amirauté britannique, en contour-nant la côte Sud-Est de l'Arabie:

(e) depuis là, latitude 22° 30' Nord et longitude 59° 55' Est (carte No. 1012 de l'Amirauté britannique) à la hauteur de Ras-el-Hadd;

(f) de là, jusqu'à l'entrée du golfe Persique, latitude 26° 31' Nord et longitude 56° 33' Est (carte No. 2873 bis de l'Amirauté britannique); depuis là, en coupant les points à l'extrémité septentrionale des îles de Tanb, Nabiyou Tanb, Sirri et Haloul;

(g) jusqu'au point où l'extrémité orientale de la limite méridionale de l'Iraq re[n]contre la frontière persane, ainsi que cette dernière est délimitée par la convention d'Erzeroum;

Les îles de la mer Rouge comprises dans cette ligne seront placées sous la souveraineté des chefs indépendants administrant les parties respectives de la péninsule à laquelle ces îles seront allouées, sous réserve, toutefois, des stipulations de l'article 8.

Article 3

Vu la proximité de la péninsule Arabe aux territoires formant partie

(British Admiralty Chart No. 2523), thence through the extreme south-west point of Sheikh Malu off Cape Bab-el-Mandeb, to

(d) The one hundred fathom contour line in the Gulf of Aden in approximate latitude 12° 29' N., longitude 43° 36' E. (British Admiralty Chart No. 2523), thence along the one hundred fathom contour line as indicated on the British Admiralty Chart No. 1012 round the south-east coast of Arabia to

(e) Latitude 22° 30' N., longitude 59° 55' E. (British Admiralty Chart No. 1012), off Ras-el-Hadd, thence to

(f) Latitude 26° 31' N., longitude 56° 33' E., in the entrance to the Persian Gulf, (British Admiralty Chart No. 2873A), then through the northernmost points of the Islands of Tanb, Nabiyou Tanb, Sirri and Halul, to

(g) The point where the eastern extremity of the southern border of Iraq meets the Persian border as fixed by the Treaty of Erzerum.⁹

The islands in the Red Sea lying within this line shall be placed under the sovereignty of the independent Chiefs of the mainland, subject however to the provisions of Article 8.

Article 3

In view of the proximity of the Arabian Peninsula to portions of the

⁹ For the text of the Persia-Turkey Delimitation Treaty signed at Erzerum on May 31, 1847, see G. F. de Martens, *Nouveau recueil général de Traités, etc.* 1843-75 (Göttingen, 1875), vol. xx, pp. 1-4.

de l'Empire britannique et aux communications maritimes avec les Indes, les autres hautes parties contractantes reconnaissent l'existence des intérêts politiques spéciaux de la Grande Bretagne dans ladite péninsule, à l'exception du royaume du Hedjaz, et déclarent qu'elles ne recherchent aucune influence politique dans ces territoires.

Article 4

La Grande Bretagne s'engage, de son côté, à user de son influence afin d'assurer au commerce et à la navigation légitimes de toutes les hautes parties contractantes [*sic*] un traitement tout aussi favorable que celui qui sera assuré au commerce et à la navigation britannique[s].

Article 5

Vu l'intérêt prépondérant de la Grande Bretagne au maintien de la Paix et de la prospérité de la péninsule Arabe, les hautes parties contractantes conviennent de respecter toutes conventions en conformité générale à celle[s] déjà conclues entre le Gouvernement britannique et les chefs de ladite péninsule autres que le roi du Hedjaz.

Article 6

Ces divers traités contiennent, en général, des dispositions d'après lesquelles le Gouvernement de Son [*sic*] Majesté Britannique doit arbitrer en tout cas de différend entre les dits chefs, les protéger de toute agression [*sic*] maritime, et garantir [*sic*] leur indépendance [*sic*] sans s'aigérer [*sic*] dans leurs affaires intérieures. De leur part les chefs s'engagent à assurer l'accès par leurs territoires aux Lieux Saints, à ne pas conclure

British Empire and to the Maritime communications with India, the other High Contracting Parties recognise that Great Britain has special political interests in the said Peninsula exclusive of the Kingdom of the Hedjaz, and declare that they seek no political influence in those territories.

Article 4

Great Britain on her side undertakes to use her influence to secure for the commerce and navigation of all the High Contracting Parties while engaged in lawful enterprises, treatment as favourable as that which she may be able to secure for her own.

Article 5

In view of the predominant interests of Great Britain in the maintenance of peace and prosperity of the Arabian Peninsula, the High Contracting Parties agree to respect any treaties on the general lines of those already concluded between His Britannic Majesty's Government and the rulers of the said Peninsula, other than the King of the Hejaz.

Article 6

These various treaties contain, generally, dispositions that His Britannic Majesty's Government should arbitrate in all disputes between the said chiefs, should protect them from attack by sea, and should guarantee their independence without interference in their internal affairs: while the chiefs engage to keep open the roads leading to the Holy Places, and not to enter into treaty with foreign Powers, or to

de traités avec les Puissances étrangères, et à ne pas aliéner de territoires [? ou] accorder des concessions dans [sic] l'assentiment du Gouvernement de Son [sic] Majesté Britannique.

Article 7

Afin de supprimer tout commerce capable d'encourager eu [sic] d'aggraver des troubles dans la péninsule — tels que le trafic des armes, la traite des esclaves, etc. les forces navales britanniques pourront coopérer avec les chefs arabes intéressés dans le but de faire observer cette interdiction et notamment les stipulations de la convention relatif [sic] au contrôle du commerce des armes et des munitions dans leurs eaux territoriales.

Article 8

L'administration de l'île de Camaran est confiée au Gouvernement britannique, afin que la station sanitaire y soit maintenue; celle des îles de Djebel Teir, de 'Centre Peak' du groupe Zebair et d'Abou Ail, est également confiée à la Grande Bretagne, pour qu'elle y maintienne les phares. La Grande Bretagne est aussi chargé[e] du maintien du phare à Moka.

Article 10 [9]

Le Gouvernement britannique se fera un devoir spécial de veiller à ce que les chefs avec lesquels il est lié par des conventions, accordent au trafic des pèlerinages toutes les facilités compatibles aux exigences de l'hygiène publique.

alienate territory or grant concessions without the consent of His Majesty's Government.

Article 7

For the purpose of suppressing all commerce tending to promote or aggravate unrest in the Peninsula, such as the Trade in Arms, the Sale of Slaves, &c. the British Naval forces shall be at liberty to co-operate with the Arab chiefs concerned, in enforcing such prohibitions, and in particular the provisions of the Convention for the Control of the Arms Traffic in their territorial waters.

Article 8

The administration of Camaran shall be entrusted to His Britannic Majesty's Government, in order that the quarantine station may be maintained there, and that of the islands of Jebel Teir, Centre Peak Island of the Zebayir group and Abu Ail, shall be equally entrusted to Great Britain for the maintenance of the lights therein. Great Britain shall also be entrusted with the maintenance of the lighthouse at Mocha.

Article 10 [9]

His Britannic Majesty's Government will make it its especial care to see that the Chiefs with whom it is in treaty relations afford every facility compatible with the requirements of public health to the pilgrim traffic.

ENCLOSURE 2 IN NO. 272

The northern boundary of Palestine as defined in the Treaty should be made expressly [sic] subject to the following reservation:

The right of Palestine to share with Syria, in proportion to the needs of the respective countries, in the use of the water of the Litani (including the Kasimiyeh) is hereby recognised. The administration of this right and jurisdiction over all questions arising in connection therewith shall be vested in a commission consisting of three members one appointed by Palestine, one appointed by Syria and the third, failing agreement between the parties, by the Council of the League of Nations. The reasonable expenses of such commission shall be borne by the Government of Palestine.

The right herein conferred upon Palestine shall include the right to divert water to Palestine from the Litani to the extent sanctioned by the commission acting under the foregoing paragraph, together with the right to acquire at a fair valuation land and other proprietary interests, to carry out works (weirs, canals, tunnels and other works) and to make use of the watercourse of the Jordan and its tributaries to the extent deemed reasonable and proper by the commission for the conveyance of the water diverted and the development and transmission of power therefrom.

No. 273

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 601 Telegraphic [E 7499/9/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 2, 1920, 5 p.m.*

His Majesty's Government are glad to inform you¹ that King Hussein has agreed to meet you at Mecca as suggested by you in your letter of the 23rd May.² They will be happy to attach a responsible Indian Moslem officer to accompany the Nejd pilgrims but they do not now propose to despatch any official to arbitrate between you, as they feel sure that it is only necessary for you and King Hussein to meet and discuss matters face to face for the various points at issue between you to be amicably settled. They are arranging with King Hussein for supplies to be available at Mecca for the return journey of the Nejd pilgrims and would be glad to be informed as soon as possible how many there are likely to be. You will no doubt realise that it is undesirable for any very large number of pilgrims to proceed from Nejd and His Majesty's Government invite you to reduce the numbers as far as possible. They request also that you will give instructions that the number of armed men proceeding with the pilgrims should be reduced to the lowest possible limit. They would be glad of an early reply re-assuring them on this

¹ i.e. the Emir Ibn Saud. In his preceding telegram, No. 600, Lord Curzon informed Lord Allenby that 'the message in my immediately following telegram has . . . been sent to Ibn Saud and you should communicate it without delay to King Hussein and inform him that His Majesty's Government are much gratified to learn that he has agreed to meet Ibn Saud at Mecca'.

² The substance of this letter had been transmitted to the India Office in Baghdad telegram No. 6943 of June 8 (not printed), a copy of which was received in the Foreign Office on June 12. Ibn Saud had suggested 'that he be allowed to go to Mecca direct with Nejd pilgrimage and that he meet King Hussein in Mecca . . . '.

point. They have informed King Hussein that this request has been made and have represented to him that it is undesirable for him to allow any concentration of his own armed forces on the route which the pilgrims will follow. They earnestly trust that the meeting which has been brought about through their auspices will have a satisfactory result and that it will prove instrumental in establishing peace between their two powerful Arab friends.

No. 274

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Alexandria) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 5, 9.50 a.m.)

No. 650 Telegraphic [E 7717/9/44]

ALEXANDRIA, July 3, 1920, 4 p.m.

Reference to Your Excellency's message communicated to me¹ through British Agent at Jeddah on June 17th.²

The war is finished but cause and object of bond between Great Britain and Arabia are not finished and will not finish owing to present and future circumstances. For this and for the satisfaction which I felt at Your Excellency's recent declarations in which you say that there is nothing to cause His Majesty's Government to withdraw from promises they made or to fail to cooperate amicably with me (which declarations I consider as a pledge upon which to rely) I hasten to state following indictment.

1. I repeat what I have said repeatedly that we have no connection or relations with Peace Conference. Our relations only with Great Britain.

2. Your Excellency did not consider question of my inability to manage affairs of the country which will be more difficult and complicated after decision of Conference to divide it. My request to you to decide what steps should be taken is made to absolve myself of blame in case I withdraw forthwith.

3. To protest against Great Britain is mean, in my view, but Your Excellency's declaration that 'there is nothing to cause etc.' encourages me to ask you to consider letters of High Commissioner at Cairo and especially one dated March 10th, 1916.³ England has what concerns honour of her glory in contents of those letters and will surely not ignore them.

4. I beg of her greatness and chivalry to give us Mesopotamia, El-Ghezira, Syria and Palestine in every way because Arabs deserve Britain's sympathy and pity. They were (and will continue to be) the only permanent means of preserving at very little cost all the interests she values.

5. Had you relied on me and put me in position for which I disposed myself and had you done according to contents of High Commissioner's letter of October 24th 1915⁴ rebellion of one . . .⁵ happen . . .⁵ what may happen in the Near East and North Arabia would have happened.

I cannot refrain from saying that opportunity is still in your hands.

¹ i.e. King Hussein.

² No. 263.

³ Cmd. 5957 of 1939, No. 10.

⁴ Ibid., No. 4.

⁵ The text is here uncertain.

I pray Your Excellency to consider matter as you are sole person responsible for result disadvantages of which are greater than advantages.

6. Physical form of El Hedjaz is well known as also are its moral and material conditions and I honour and respect your decisions which have given it title of 'a Power'. These were my reasons for asking that it should be annexed to rest of its country and for stating causes of my inability to manage it . . .⁶ increased.

Message ends.

Paragraph 6. King means that Hedjaz is so barren and devoid of resources that it cannot exist as a separate country.

⁶ The text is here uncertain.

No. 275

Count de Salis¹ (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received July 8)

No. 82 [E 7910/4164/44]

PALAZZO BORGHESE, ROME, *July 3, 1920*

My Lord,

In your despatch No. 105 of the 4th of June (E 5808/4164/44)² Your Lordship referred to an understanding arrived at between the British, French and Italian Governments at San Remo, to the effect that with the assumption of a mandate over Palestine by Great Britain, all French claims to a protectorate over Catholics would be definitely abandoned and withdrawn. The Italian Chargé d'Affaires has informed the Foreign Office that the French Government intended to claim from the Vatican the recognition of France's traditional privileged position in the matter of certain liturgical ceremonial and precedence, although their agreement to abandon these rights was definitely stated in the *procès verbaux* of the San Remo Conference of the 24th of April, 1920.³

On my asking him, Monsignor Cerretti⁴ promised to give me material for a reply; I imagine that at the time in question discussions were going on with the French and that he was not quite certain what claims in this respect were going to be pressed. The subject was raised at the interview on the 25th of June between Sir Herbert Samuel and Cardinal Gasparri⁵ who wished to know what was the view of the British Government on the point and was told that his inquiry would be referred to the Foreign Office. Sir Herbert Samuel reported the interview to Your Lordship in his despatch of the 26th of June. For convenience of reference I enclose copy of this paper which was kindly communicated to me.⁶

A memorandum has now been given to me, recording the Cardinal's

¹ H.M. Minister on special mission to the Vatican.

² Not printed.

³ See Vol. VIII, No. 15, minute 2.

⁴ Papal Secretary for Extraordinary Affairs.

⁵ Cardinal Secretary of State. Cf. No. 269, n. 2.

⁶ This unnumbered despatch is not here printed. An extract from the first paragraph of the despatch is printed in Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs*, pp. 153-4.

conversation with Sir Herbert Samuel on this particular point; it of course confirms Sir Herbert Samuel's report but the arguments employed by the Cardinal are related in a little more detail. After alluding to the procedure which took place on solemn occasions, the Cardinal mentioned that at the Conference of San Remo these honours were declared to be no longer in force (*decaduti*) since there was an end of the protectorate of which they were an accessory. This is in accordance with the language always held to me on the subject for the past three years at the Vatican, to the effect that the relation between the honours and the Protectorate was that of accessory and principal, and that if the principal were to cease, the accessory should equally cease with it. The Cardinal went on to enquire what would be the view of the British Government, should the French, in memory of their former services to the Church, ask that these honours should nevertheless be continued. On Sir Herbert Samuel replying that this was a question to be decided between France and the Holy See, the Cardinal, wishing to pose the question with a little more precision, said that should the Holy See continue to grant these honours to France, and perhaps to any other Catholic nation which asked for it, England, not being a Catholic nation, would certainly not ask for such honours for her representative in Palestine. But what, added the Cardinal, if her representative were a Catholic? In that event how would England regard the situation? Sir Herbert Samuel answered there would, in his opinion, be a difficulty (*che a suo avviso così non potrebbe andare*) and that in any case he would have referred the point to his government.

This morning, in the course of conversation, the Cardinal went over the same ground carefully and said that he was anxious to learn the views of His Majesty's Government and I promised that no time should be lost in putting the matter before Your Lordship.

Nothing has so far been said to me here respecting another point mentioned in Sir Herbert Samuel's despatch, the suggestion that Catholic interests in relation to the Holy Places should be represented through the good offices of France. Discussions are at present going on with regard to the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and France, and from the foregoing it would seem clear that the Quai d'Orsay are bringing a good deal of pressure to bear on the Vatican in order to recover indirectly as many as possible of the advantages of the lost protectorate. In support of this policy the Catholic 'Croix' has carried on an active campaign to which a paper like the 'Temps' has not been entirely a stranger while the same object is pursued by an article signed by Roger Lambelin in the 'Correspondant' of 25 May to which a certain prominence has been given here.

I have, &c.,

J. DE SALIS

No. 276

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Alexandria) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 9, 11.15 a.m.)

No. 658 Telegraphic [E 7965/9/44]

ALEXANDRIA, July 5, 1920, 8.40 p.m.

My¹ confidence in Great Britain is . . .² by fact that I have ignored adverse criticism of Moslems in Turkey and elsewhere concerning my . . .² with her. I would lose my honour if I asked to withdraw in order to oppose her.

Her fundamental reason in asking me to revolt was to renew the glory of the Arabs and to appease Moslem sentiment.

As a result both Turkey and Arabs have perished. What can I do but withdraw if I do not commit suicide?

I will never oppose what is necessary for peace and progress of country especially when there are thousands of pilgrims here.

I asked two things for them in accordance with our agreement. First, help if there was internal trouble brought by the intrigues of enemies or jealousy of certain Emirs. Secondly, the monthly subsidy. Refusal of these has placed me in a critical position and I need not refer to consequences of my fall at present time nor to stain on my future history if I remain nor to contents of my letter of April 18th, 1920.³

I suggested in our original agreement that Great Britain should occupy Basra only. This will safeguard rights and honour of both parties. Same applies to Syria and Palestine. If people are given their rights they will be your slaves for ever—otherwise there will be hostility and hate.

If there is another way to save me from my withdrawal and which will enable me to remain as you desire please explain it and I will adopt it.

¹ i.e. King Hussein's.

² The text is here uncertain.

³ This 'called attention to' King Hussein's despatch of Aug. 28, 1918; for which see Appendix A to No. 342 below.

No. 277

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 7, 11 a.m.)

No. 673 Telegraphic [E 7845/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, July 6, 1920, 12.5 p.m.

My telegram No. 661.¹

I have received a further letter from Emir Feisal at Damascus dated June 21st² in which he states that Haddad Pasha³ has telegraphed that His

¹ This reference is incorrect and should probably be to Cairo telegram No. 616 of June 23, i.e. No. 268.

² Not printed. Copies of this letter and related correspondence were forwarded under cover of Lord Allenby's despatch No. 741 of July 3, received at the Foreign Office on July 12.

³ Syrian diplomatic agent in London.

Majesty's Government have sanctioned payments of his subsidy for March, April and May.

Feisal adds that he has instructed Gaafar Pasha who brought letter, to remain in Egypt unofficially as liaison officer until various questions which he has raised with His Majesty's Government are settled.

In this connection see my telegram No. 638.⁴

Gaafar Pasha showed me at the same time a letter from Feisal to himself dated June 21st containing messages for me to the effect, firstly, he has taken severe measures against those responsible for recent regrettable incidents and secondly, that he has informed French Authorities that he will break off relations with them unless they consent to recognise his independence within one week.

I have . . .⁵ Gaafar Pasha an answer for Feisal to the effect that, while I am grateful for action he has taken to keep order, I sincerely trust that he will do nothing to impare [*sic*] his relations with General Gouraud.

Full text of correspondence follows by bag.²

I am communicating this and similar information to Sir Herbert Samuel.

⁴ Of July 1, not printed.

⁵ The text is here uncertain.

No. 278

Lord Hardinge¹ to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 627 Telegraphic [E 7845/2/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 9, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 673 (of 6th July. Emir Feisal's subsidy).²

His Majesty's Government have not sanctioned subsidy for March, April and May. Haddad denies having sent any such telegram.

¹ Lord Curzon attended the Inter-Allied Conference at Spa, July 5-16; see Vol. VIII, Chap. VIII.

² No. 277.

No. 279

Lord Hardinge to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 634 Telegraphic [E 7835/9/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 10, 1920, 9 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 657.¹

We fully realize that Hussein is in a difficult mood. Question of his subsidy is being considered by Cabinet. Meanwhile Ibn Saud has fixed the 18th July as last possible date for Nejd pilgrimage, and it appeared to us better to accept the fact that it will be made, than to risk the possibility of his making it by force. We suggest that this aspect of the question might be put to Hussein in the event of his making difficulties.

¹ Of July 5, not printed.

No. 280

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received July 13, 9 p.m.)

No. 703 Telegraphic [E 8201/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, July 13, 1920, 3.40 p.m.

I have received following message from Feisal, addressed to me. Begins:—

‘French are concentrating at Jerus to attack Aleppo with guns, aeroplanes, and tanks. They demand military occupation of all stations from Ryak to Aleppo, unconditional acceptance of French mandate, and of French Syrian money in Eastern zone. They state that I may not leave for Europe before accepting these terms. I request that prompt representations may be made as French are moving rapidly.’¹ Ends.

Addressed to Foreign Office and Jerusalem.

¹ The full text of the Emir Feisal’s foregoing message, dated from Damascus on July 11, was forwarded to the Foreign Office by Lord Allenby under cover of his despatch No. 804 of July 17, not printed.

No. 281

Lord Hardinge to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 643 Telegraphic [E 8026/9/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 13, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 682 (of July 8th.¹ Hussein—Ibn Saud).

King Hussein was reported in your telegram No. 520 of the 29th May² to have promised that no obstacles would be put in the way of pilgrims from Nejd provided that they came unarmed and were in charge of a responsible person. Nothing was said about their proceeding by sea.

Colonel Vickery’s report for the week ending June 1st which did not reach us until the 22nd June³ shows that by the 28th May King Hussein had introduced a new stipulation that no Nejd pilgrims should enter the Hejaz until the conclusion of an agreement with Ibn Saud.

In your despatch of the 12th June⁴ you referred to this as an alteration of Hussein’s previous decision and we assume that his assent to the pilgrimage being re-opened was originally given as reported in your telegram No. 520.²

The demand that the pilgrims should proceed without arms was not one which we could unreservedly support, though we have impressed upon Ibn Saud in our telegram No. 601⁵ the necessity for restricting the number of armed men within the smallest possible limits.

Further than this we do not propose to go. We expressly stated in my

¹ Not printed. This referred to a new message from King Hussein ‘to say that he only agreed to Bin Saud’s going to Mecca with an escort of (? 300 men) and that he expressly refused to consent to pilgrims coming from Nejd by land’.

² Not printed.

³ This report (not printed) was transmitted under cover of Lord Allenby’s despatch No. 625 of June 12.

⁴ See n. 3.

⁵ No. 273.

telegram No. 410⁶ that continuance of our support was conditional on the re-opening of the pilgrimage and to this we adhere.

We suggest that Hussein should be reminded of his original promise, and that he should be urged to take full advantage of the opportunity now afforded to him to show that he for his part is determined to establish peace with Ibn Saud, whom we fully believe to be in earnest when he guarantees good behaviour.

We regard it as less likely that the pilgrimage will in itself cause an outbreak if it is generally known that the meeting is to take place.

You should make a communication in this sense to Hussein without delay in such terms as you consider suitable.

⁶ No. 245.

No. 282

Lord Hardinge to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 38 Telegraphic [E 8090/2/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 14, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your letter of 26th June from Rome.¹

I do not wish you to negotiate direct with Feisal on such a matter as recognition of his sovereignty. Only likely subjects of discussion between you and him appear to be frontiers and trade. As regards frontiers negotiations are proceeding in Paris and it would be unwise for you concurrently to negotiate with Feisal, more especially in view of French objections to direct communication between him and His Majesty's Government. It is out of the question for Palestine administration to make a loan to Feisal in present circumstances, nor do I contemplate continuance of subsidy. French objections to direct communication make it difficult at present to set up commission alluded to in paragraphs 4 and 6 of your letter. It does not seem practical to offer Arab Government right of nominating one of members of body which will control Moslem holy places in Palestine. Any such body should rather be composed of local Arabs.

You will no doubt bear in mind the great importance of consulting us before taking any measures affecting questions of real importance such as land concessions and immigration.

¹ No. 269.

No. 283

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon

(Received July 15, 3.15 p.m.)

No. 711 Telegraphic [E 8313/2/44]

Very urgent

CAIRO, *July 15, 1920, 1 p.m.*

I have received further letter from Feisal at (? Damascus) dated July 1st asking officially that His Majesty's Government should intervene between

French Government and himself and that points of difference between them may be submitted to arbitration in order that catastrophe may be averted.

He re-affirms his anxiety to find peaceful solution and asks that he may receive early reply.

Addressed to Foreign Office, sent to Jerusalem.¹

¹ A note on the file records that this telegram was repeated to Spa.

No. 284

Lord Hardinge to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 653 Telegraphic [E 8397/2/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 16, 1920, 10 p.m.

Your 716¹ and recent telegrams.² I am afraid that it is impossible for us to interfere. Since grant of Mandate for Syria to French at San Remo they have possessed a prior right with reference to purely Syrian affairs which it would be neither right nor expedient for us to contest. Any attempt on our part to do so would produce greatest possible irritation here and would merely result in old game of one party being played up against other out there. French disinterest themselves altogether from Palestine and Mesopotamia, employing same argument as regards our position in those countries. If their present attitude to Feisal lands them in future trouble, the responsibility will be exclusively theirs.

¹ Of July 16, not printed. This reported that the Emir Feisal had received 'ultimatum from French on lines forecasted [*sic*] in my telegram 703 [No. 280] with additional demand for punishment of Arabs who have fought against French'.

² e.g. Nos. 280 and 283.

No. 285

Earl Curzon to Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo)

No. 654 Telegraphic [E 8300/9/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 17, 1920, 5 p.m.

Your telegram No. 710 (of 14th July);¹ Hussein and Ibn Saud).

You are authorized to make payments to Hussein up to a limit of £30,000 on the conditions suggested by you. We are content to leave it to you to take such steps as you think fit to ensure that this sum is expended by Hussein on securing good behaviour of Bedouin tribes, whether by withholding some portion of it until after his meeting with Ibn Saud or in any other way.

If you are convinced that Hussein will be able with this assistance to control his followers the suggestion that arms should be left at Taif may be made to Ibn Saud either direct by British Agent in letter as from His Majesty's Consul or by Hussein himself.

¹ Not printed. In this telegram Lord Allenby had supported the grant of a subsidy to King Hussein provided he undertook to fulfil the guarantees requested in No. 245.

With regard to arbitration you may inform Hussein that our offer is still open and that in the event of his meeting with Ibn Saud producing no final result His Majesty's Govt. are prepared to despatch an official to arbitrate either at Jeddah or after the pilgrimage at Aden.

A possible alternative would be the presence of an influential Egyptian or Arabic-speaking Indian pilgrim at the meeting in Mecca.

No. 286

Earl Curzon to Sir A. Geddes (Washington)

*No. 619 Telegraphic [E 8622/20/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 23, 1920, 9 p.m.*

Following from Mr. Philip Kerr on behalf of the Prime Minister:—

'Colonel House' spoke to me yesterday about the oil situation, and said he thought that this was more calculated to produce bad feeling between England and America at the present time than Ireland. My immediately succeeding telegram gives the Anglo-French Agreement about oil,² in case you have not already seen it. House and his friends tell me that its publication ought to be accompanied by a very careful explanation, as in its present form it is calculated to give rise to very hostile propaganda.

'As I understand it, the situation is this:—

'1. Before the war the Turkish Petroleum Company obtained a concession from the Turkish Government for the development of the Mesopotamian oilfields. As the outcome of the war the British and French Governments agreed to hand over to France the German shares in the company. It is therefore now a predominantly Anglo-French company.

'2. According to the Sykes-Picot Agreement, concluded in 1915 [1916],³ in order to prevent misunderstandings between France, Russia and Great Britain in the event of the collapse of the Turkish Empire, the Mosul areas were included within the French sphere of influence. Inasmuch, however, as Great Britain bore the chief burden of the costs of the war against Turkey, estimated at some 700,000,000*l.*, and suffered considerable losses in it, France agreed to modify the Sykes-Picot Agreement so as to include Mosul in Mesopotamia, of which it is naturally a part.

'3. As the result of France agreeing to this, the British Government agreed that France should be guaranteed an interest in the Mesopotamian oil.

'4. Accordingly the present agreement only prescribes that, if the Mesopotamian fields are developed by Government action, France shall be entitled to purchase at ordinary commercial rates 25 per cent. of the oil output, in consideration of permitting a pipe-line to be built through Syria and providing for other facilities; or in the event of the oil being developed by

¹ One of President Wilson's chief unofficial advisers and lately U.S. Commissioner Plenipotentiary at the Peace Conference.

² i.e. Foreign Office telegram No. 620 of July 23, not printed. For the text of this agreement of April 24, see Cmd. 675 of 1920.

³ See Vol. IV, Chap. II, pp. 241-51.

private companies, France will be entitled to 25 per cent. shareholding, less a certain percentage to be handed over to the Mesopotamian Government.

'The effect of the agreement, therefore, is simply to secure France a share in the output of oil at ordinary commercial rates. It does not exclude any other Power; it is not an agreement to divide the oil between Great Britain and France. Great Britain is perfectly free to develop Mesopotamia in any way it may think advisable, subject only to its being undertaken to sell France 25 per cent. of the output, if worked by Government action, or a participation of 25 per cent. of any company formed, if worked by private enterprise. Of course, Great Britain, as mandatory, is responsible for seeing, in the first place, that the oilfields are properly and economically developed, and, in the second, for seeing that the Mesopotamian people get full advantage from the development of their natural resources. As mandatory, it cannot surrender that responsibility or allow Mesopotamia to be exploited indiscriminately by anybody who comes along.

'As I see it, the point which will have to be made clear to the American people is that no agreement has been made which excludes other nations, or which reserves exclusive rights to Great Britain. All that has happened is that Great Britain, as the Power ultimately responsible for the development of Mesopotamian oilfields, has thought it necessary to guarantee to France a supply of oil at ordinary commercial rates, because France has got no oil of her own and because oil is essential to her reconstruction.'

No. 287

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 2538 [E 8526/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 24, 1920

My Lord,

I have to inform Your Excellency that the French Ambassador called on Lord Hardinge on the afternoon of the 19th July.

2. Lord Hardinge showed M. Cambon Lord Allenby's telegram, containing a translation of the French ultimatum to the Arab Government,¹ which so far he had not seen. After he had studied it attentively, Lord Hardinge told him that a question had been asked in the House of Commons that afternoon,² to which a very careful and non-committal reply had been given, avoiding all possible offence to the French Government. Nevertheless, he had been asked by Lord Curzon to point out to the French Ambassador that the ultimatum contained one or two points of a very doubtful character: for instance, although it was quite understood that the French had need of

¹ This telegram, No. 730 of July 18, is not printed. For an English version of the text of the five demands contained in Gen. Gouraud's ultimatum of July 14, see J. de V. Loder, *The Truth about Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria* (London, 1923), pp. 77-78. For a French text, see J. Pichon, *Sur la Route des Indes* (Paris, 1932), pp. 353-61.

² See 132 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 39-42.

the use of the railway for the provisioning of their troops, the military occupation of the railway and of the towns of Aleppo, Damascus and Homs would be difficult to explain, and hardly seemed warranted by the circumstances of the case. The occupation of Aleppo town was definitely stated as one of the conditions of the ultimatum, and we had reason to believe that the occupation of the other towns was also intended. Lord Hardinge remarked that the recognition and acceptance of the French mandate by Feisal was strongly advocated by His Majesty's Government, and the description of its purport as contained in paragraph 3 of the ultimatum³ appeared to be fairly reasonable, but the acceptance of Syrian money, that is to say of French money or notes in Syria, seemed more difficult to defend and might even be proved to be a measure of a provocative nature.

3. Lord Hardinge assured M. Cambon that, in putting forward these views, Lord Curzon was actuated by the most friendly motives, and with an honest desire to see the establishment of peace in the territories of the French mandate; and that His Majesty's Government had no desire in any way to interfere between the French and the Emir Feisal. He added that so far we were quite ignorant of the nature of the French mandate, and if extreme measures were made conditions of its acceptance, it might prove that they would not receive the approval and recognition of the League of Nations. Consequently, his Lordship felt that extreme caution was desirable, and in making these observations to the French Ambassador, Lord Hardinge reiterated the assurance that they were made in the most friendly spirit and solely with the desire to avoid difficulties in the future.

4. M. Cambon, in reply, thanked Lord Hardinge for the friendly nature of the observations, which he would not fail to transmit to his Government, but he remarked that proofs undoubtedly existed of intrigues by the Emir Feisal against the French not only in Damascus but also in the Lebanon, and it was difficult for him to see what measures General Gouraud could possibly take except those already prescribed, such as the occupation of the railway and of the towns with which it is connected. He could assure Lord Hardinge that there was no intention of permanent military occupation, and he did not see what other measures were possible to put an end to the intrigues and to assure the acceptance by the Syrian Government of the French mandate. As soon as the mandate had been accepted and order had been restored, the troops would be withdrawn. It was necessary that these results should be obtained in the first instance. He remarked that the situation would be precisely the same in Palestine or in Mesopotamia, and added that he believed from what he heard that the situation in Mesopotamia was almost analogous to that in Syria, and that a very strong force of troops

³ Paragraph 3, as summarized in Lord Allenby's telegram No. 730, read as follows: '(? Acceptance of) French mandate. Mandate will respect independent (? peoples) of Syria and will remain wholly compatible with principle of Government by Syrian authorities properly invested with power by the popular will. It will only entail on the part of mandatory power co-operation in form of collaboration and assistance, but will in no case assume Colonial form of an annexation or a direct administration.'

was being despatched to re-establish order and keep open the lines of communication.⁴

I am, &c.,
CURZON OF KEDLESTON

⁴ Reinforcements of British Indian troops were being sent to Mesopotamia on account of Arab risings in the Middle Euphrates area; see 132 *H. C. Deb.*, 5 s, cols. 216-17.

No. 288

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received July 30)

No. 2394 [E 9112/2/44]

PARIS, July 27, 1920

My Lord,

The French troops under the command of General Gouraud entered Damascus yesterday.

It will be recollected that on the termination of the Emir Feisal's visit to Paris last January it was announced in the Press here that a provisional agreement had been arrived at between the French Government and the Emir whereby the latter agreed to accept a French mandate for the whole of Syria, France in return consenting to the formation of an Arab State to include the four towns of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo and to be administered by the Emir with the assistance of French advisers and inspectors.

It soon became clear that the Emir would be unable to persuade his countrymen to accept this agreement. Early in March last, in fact, a Syrian Congress proclaimed Feisal king of Syria, and public opinion in this country began to show uneasiness as to the extent to which France might find herself committed in those regions.

The press however issued reassuring statements to the effect that the difficulties experienced by the French were being grossly exaggerated by false reports emanating from Cairo which were engendering a regular campaign of calumny against General Gouraud. At the same time the reports which reached France as to the reception accorded to the Roman Catholic mission of Cardinal Dubois¹ spoke of the cordial welcome which he received on all sides, and of the extent of pro-French feeling and French culture in those districts. Cardinal Dubois reported that while he found a strong feeling against the Jewish emigration into Palestine and a desire that Palestine should not be separated from Syria, he was of the opinion that the population were in favour of the maintenance of the French protectorate over Syria. In spite of these and similar statements it was recognised as time went on that the French were encountering serious difficulties in the management of the country. Although it was denied that the body which had elected Emir Feisal as King was really representative of Syrian feeling it was evident

¹ Cardinal Dubois, Archbishop of Rouen, had headed a mission to Syria, Palestine and the Lebanon between Dec. 1919 and Feb. 1920.

that the Syrians were not prepared to accept the French control with a good grace.

The Emir Feisal was summoned in March to proceed to Europe to state his case. He stated in reply that owing to local feeling in the country he was unable himself to leave it until the Allies had acknowledged the independence of Syria. He was however represented at the San Remo Conference by an envoy General Nuri Pasha.² The decision of that Conference to award the mandate for Syria to France (those for Mesopotamia, including Mosul and Palestine being awarded to Great Britain) provoked strong protests from Damascus and the Syrian Unionist Party.

Since that date the relations between France and Feisal have been strained. Feisal himself announced, as soon as the San Remo decisions became known, that as King of Syria he could not recognise any mandate placing a portion of Syria under foreign control. At this time the French forces in northern Syria and Cilicia were gravely hampered by the attacks of the Turkish nationalists. After the disasters at Aintab, Urfa and Marash, General Gouraud had been compelled towards the end of May to sign a twenty days' armistice with Mustapha Kemal.³ These attacks, especially at Mersina, Killis, Adana and Tarsus, continued after the expiration of that armistice, and for a time General Gouraud was obliged to hold his hand pending the receipt of French reinforcements. These were, however, sent to him until his force was increased to some 80,000 men.

General Gouraud then proceeded to strike. Early in July he addressed his ultimatum to the Emir demanding the recognition of the French mandate over Syria, liberty to use the Rayak-Aleppo railway, immediate abandonment of the forced recruiting, the reduction of the shereefian army to the same proportions as on December 1st 1919, the free circulation of French-Syrian currency and the punishment of the authors of the Syrian attacks on the French forces.

The French Press quoted the following causes as justifying the ultimatum:—The incessant attacks on French outposts, the seizure of revenue properly belonging to the administration of the Ottoman Debt, the refusal to accept the new French currency issued for circulation in Syria and the seizure of a dragoman attached to the French military authority at Aleppo, and the occupation by the Arabs of the French Railway in Northern Syria which prevented reinforcements being sent up to Cilicia.

As the reply of the Emir did not reach General Gouraud within the stipulated period a French column occupied the railway junctions and entered Rayak thereby dominating Damascus. The Emir had in the meantime accepted the terms of the ultimatum and protested against the French action declaring that the delay in the delivery of his reply was due to fortuitous circumstances over which he had no control. General Gouraud accepted this excuse, and announced to the Emir that he would suspend any further

² Lord Curzon noted: 'Feisal was not as stated represented at the San Remo Conference by Nuri Pasha. He turned up uninvited at a San Remo Hotel but that did not constitute him a representative at the Conference. C 31/7.'

³ See No. 265, n. 1.

action provided no attack were made on the French troops. On July 22nd however such attacks were made on the French at Tel-Kalah where the French outposts were pushed back by some 400 shereefian horsemen, while it was announced by the French that a further attack was being prepared on their troops guarding the Damascus-Beyrout road. On the following day the French troops under General Goybet, after driving back the enemy at Tel-Kalah accordingly took the offensive against the Syrian troops holding the defile, eight kilometres long which crosses the mountains situated between the plain of Bekaa and Damascus and leads to Khan Meiseloum, the headquarters of the Shereefian army. The Shereefian forces were routed with a loss of nine can[n]ons and considerable material. The Emir's Minister for War, Yusaf Azim, was also killed during the battle. The losses of the French troops, which consisted of infantry of the line, Algerian riflemen, *chasseurs d'Afrique* and Senegalese regiments, are stated to have been comparatively slight. At the close of the day a parliamentarian was despatched by Feisal to say that no further resistance would be offered and that the town of Damascus would undertake the revictualling of the French troops.

Since the announcement that an ultimatum had been sent to the Emir Feisal the situation in Syria has been somewhat fully discussed in the French press. Though it was suggested in one paper (the 'Petit Journal') that the British agents, misunderstanding the intentions of their Government, had possibly stirred up the Emir against the French, the Press has been singularly free from any anti-British comments. The majority of the newspapers welcomed the despatch of the ultimatum, giving a list of hostile acts for which the Emir was responsible, while the large number of troops which have gradually been accumulating under the command of General Gouraud was regarded as justifying the hope that he would if necessary, be able to make France respected in the Near East.

The criticisms which appeared in the press on the subject of the debate in the House of Commons on the 19th instant⁴ were in general, favourable towards His Majesty's Government. But both the 'Temps' and the 'Débats' though expressing their satisfaction at the replies made on behalf of His Majesty's Government by Mr. Bonar Law, criticised the taste of those members who caused the debate. The 'Temps' enquired how Lord Robert Cecil could possibly in his references to Article 22 misconstrue the Treaty which he had helped to draw up, and Mr. Ormsby Gore and Lord Winterton were reproached for showing scant courtesy towards France in putting the French Government and the 'Arab Government' on the same footing in their speeches. The majority of the papers in fact took the view that England would have been somewhat surprised and hurt if a similar debate had been held in the French Chamber on the subject of British administration in Mesopotamia.

An interesting light on the state of the feelings in Syria was thrown by the evidence given on July 25th before the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the Chamber by M. l'Estailleur-Epamteraine, who has just returned from

⁴ See 132 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 143-88.

Syria and who had seen the Emir on several occasions. As regards Palestine M. l'Estailleur stated that the British authorities were encountering great difficulties, owing to the opposition of both Musulman and Xtian [Christian] populations to the expropriations which were being carried out there. He confirmed Cardinal Dubois' statement as regards the demands of the Islamic-Xtian Society in favour of joining Syria to Palestine and also as to their friendly feelings towards France. The difficulties in Syria were, in his opinion, due to the want of firmness of the French Government and to the fact that the position of France had never been clearly explained to the populations who, owing to the terms of some of Monsieur Clemenceau's notes and to their faith in the infallibility of President Wilson's principles, were under the impression that complete autonomy was to be granted to them. These ideas had never been denied and the British had added fuel to the flames of discontent by stating that France intended to make of Syria a second Algeria. The object of Feisal was to play off England and France against each other with the object of getting as much for himself as possible. The Emir was however, he said, perfectly ready to come to an understanding with France. It was rather to his entourage that France owed the difficulties she had experienced. Monsieur d'Estailleur insisted on the necessity of defining the French policy in Syria and Lebanon as soon as possible. He added incidentally, that the Turkish Nationalists, who hated the English even more than the French, would be perfectly willing to recognise French economic rights over Cilicia and elsewhere.

I have, &c.,
DERBY

No. 289

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Grahame (Paris)

No. 2615 [E 9106/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 28, 1920*

Sir,

While at Boulogne yesterday, I seized the opportunity to have a conversation with M. Berthelot about the French intentions with regard to Syria.¹

I pointed out to him that, sorry though we were that this open rupture had taken place between the French and the Emir Feisal, and easily and even reasonably as we might have approached the French Government with interrogations, if not with protestations, we had—from a consciousness of the difficulties with which they were confronted, and in pursuance of the absolute loyalty which had characterised our entire proceedings towards them—abstained from addressing to them any enquiries during the operations which had now culminated in the defeat of Feisal and the occupation of Damascus. I said, however, that we could not disinterest ourselves

¹ Lord Curzon and M. Berthelot attended the Second Conference of Boulogne, July 27–28; see Vol. VIII, Chap. IX.

altogether from these proceedings; and that, although Syria had been placed under the mandate of France with our consent, and we should adhere as faithfully to that engagement as I was convinced the French Government would to the corresponding settlement in Mesopotamia and Palestine, yet Feisal was brought into certain relations with us, both in connection with the pledges we had given to his father as to the independence of the Arab countries, and also because of his connection with the areas for which we had accepted a mandate. We therefore could not view his possible disappearance from the scene without some concern, and we felt that no step in this direction, if it were contemplated, should be taken without consultation with us. Rumours had appeared in the newspapers that Feisal had fled from Damascus, and I had no clear idea at the moment of who was in occupation of the city, or who was governing the State.

In reply M. Berthelot gave me a summary of the recent course of events. According to him, the acceptance by the Emir of the French ultimatum, although delayed, as had been described in the Press, had nevertheless reached General Gouraud, and had been acted upon by him. The French advance had been continued, but an armistice had been arranged, and the French troops had, M. Berthelot alleged, no intention of occupying the city, had it not been that they were suddenly and violently attacked by the Arab forces. A prolonged battle, with considerable losses, had ensued, and at the end of it the French had been compelled to march into Damascus. So far as he knew, the Emir Feisal was still there, and had not fled; but M. Berthelot could not say what his relations were with the French authorities at the moment. M. Berthelot then described to me, in tones of considerable irritation, the extreme provocation which, he said, the Emir had given to the French, his disloyalty to the pledges into which he had entered in Paris, his opposition and hostility to the French troops, and the intolerable conduct by which he had brought matters to the present issue. Though, M. Berthelot assured me, the French had had, and still had, no desire to break with the Emir Feisal, he scarcely concealed from me the probability that, in the last resort, they would find it necessary to dispense with his services altogether, and to substitute some other ruler in his place.

I rather gathered from him that, following upon the lines of our own draft mandate for Mesopotamia, which prescribed the promulgation of an organic law within two years of the acceptance of the mandate, the French might be contemplating an interim period in which they would administer the State themselves, until they found some suitable person who could fill the Emir Feisal's place. M. Berthelot pointed out to me with some force that the engagements into which we had both entered required us, if a ruler was set up, to see that he was one who was acceptable to the people. He denied altogether that the Emir Feisal possessed this qualification, and said that, if the Emir were replaced, his successor would have to be a man whom the Syrians themselves desired.

I expressed to M. Berthelot the hope that the French might not be so unwise as to suggest at any moment the elevation of the pretender Mohammed

Said, the son [grandson] of Abdul Kader, who had recently been released from France, and had himself suggested in a speech that he might be an official French candidate for the throne.² Such a proceeding, I assured M. Berthelot, could not be regarded with any equanimity by His Majesty's Government.

He assured me, in reply, that such an idea had never entered the heads of the French Government. He acknowledged with warmth the correctness and loyalty of the attitude which His Majesty's Government had maintained.

Since placing the above on record, I find my suspicions more than confirmed by the announcement in the press (July 29)³ that the French have deposed Feisal and set up a puppet Syrian Ministry in his place.

C. of K.

² This speech was given at Tunis and reported in Paris telegram No. 652 of June 2, not printed. For Abd-el-Kader see No. 23, n. 8.

³ See *The Times*, July 29, p. 12.

No. 290

Sir A. Geddes (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received July 29, 10.45 p.m.)

*No. 565 Telegraphic [E 9093/20/44]**

WASHINGTON, July 29, 1920

Your telegram No. 619 of 23rd July.¹

I am issuing to press an explanation of salient points of agreement. Even so, publication of text will in all probability be made occasion for misrepresentation, hostile propaganda, and violent protests from oil interests, who may try to bring pressure to bear on Administration to demand modification of arrangements made.²

It would be most helpful if French Government could be warned that it is of highest importance in their own interests that they support agreement actively before American public. This Mesopotamian machine works well and covers a large portion of American press.

¹ No. 286.

² For the text of a note of July 26 from the U.S. Secretary of State referring to the Anglo-French Oil Agreement, on which the U.S. Ambassador in London based a communication to the Foreign Office on July 28, see *F.R.U.S.*, 1920, vol. ii, pp. 658-9.

No. 291

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 2595 [E 8984/2/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 29, 1920

My Lord,

M. Cambon called on Lord Hardinge on the morning of the 27th July, and, in accordance with my instructions, Lord Hardinge spoke to him of the Emir Feisal.

Lord Hardinge told M. Cambon that, according to news in the press, Emir Feisal was in flight, but that this Department did not know in which direction he had gone. After what had passed it was probable that the French Government might wish to place some other Mahommedan notable on the throne of Syria. This, Lord Hardinge pointed out, would be a serious step in view of all that had passed and of His Majesty's Government's mutual relations with and engagements to Feisal. But if and when another chief was set up in his place it should clearly be only with the assent and approval of the people of Syria and after consultation with His Majesty's Government, in view of this country's interests in Palestine and elsewhere. Lord Hardinge said that it had occurred to me that the French might contemplate putting the Emir Mahommed Said¹ in the place of Feisal. This would be a very unfortunate selection, and one which His Majesty's Government could not regard with equanimity. Lord Hardinge sketched out the recent career of the Emir and showed his hostile attitude towards His Majesty's Government both before and after the French occupation of Syria, and he expressed the hope that in the event of a change at Damascus his candidature would not be put forward by the French Government.

M. Cambon assured Lord Hardinge that he had never heard of the Emir Said, but that he would not fail to report to M. Millerand what Lord Hardinge had said to him.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

¹ See No. 289.

No. 292

*Col. Sir A. Wilson (Baghdad) to Mr. Montagu
(Received July 31, 10 p.m.)¹*

No. 9249 Telegraphic [E 9252/2/44]

Clear the line

BAGHDAD, July 31, 1920

Your telegram of the 30th July² intimating Feisal's departure by order of the French to Deraa, in British sphere. As seen from Baghdad this may mean one of two things: he may be on his way back to Hedjaz, or he may be intending to remain in that part of Syria under British influence. If he remains at Deraa and still claims to be King of Syria he will gather round him a considerable number of his former officials and will be constant source of trouble to the French, but if he withdraws his claims to Syria and only claims paramountcy in Palestine his presence will make things very hard for French and will put us in a very difficult position since we can scarcely take up definite line against him in view of decision of His Majesty's Government referred to in your telegram of 20th July P. 5598.³

¹ Date of receipt in the India Office; a copy of this telegram was filed in the Foreign Office on Aug. 3.

² Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

³ Not traced in Foreign Office archives. The decision referred to is presumably that mentioned in No. 284. The Emir Feisal had arrived in Deraa on July 28.

Will His Majesty's Government consider possibility of offering him Amirate of Mesopotamia? Objections entertained on this side to Amir have hitherto been primarily that no suitable person could be found. We have always regarded Feisal as booked for Syria. Nothing that I have heard during the last few months has led me to modify my views of unsuitability of Abdulla and our experience of last few weeks in Baghdad makes it fairly clear that no local candidate will be successful in obtaining sufficient local support to enable him to make good. Feisal alone of all Arabian potentates has any idea of practical difficulties of running a civilised government on Arab lines. He can scarcely fail to realise that foreign assistance is vital to the continued existence of an Arab State. He realises danger of relying on an Arab army. If we were to offer him the Amirate of Mesopotamia not only might we re-establish our position in the eyes of Arab world, but we also might go far to wipe out accusation which would otherwise be made against us of bad faith both with Feisal and with people of this country, and if His Majesty's Government eventually decides drastically to restrict its commitments in this country there would be better prospects of it being done with Feisal here than by any other possible arrangement. General, Bagdad, cordially concurs.

No. 293

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 2531 [E 9093/20/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 31, 1920*

My Lord,

With reference to your despatch No. 2332 of the 21st instant¹ and to your subsequent telegram reporting that arrangements had been made by the French Government for the publication in the French press of the 24th instant of the text of the Anglo-French Oil Agreement,² I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a telegram which was addressed to His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington on the 23rd instant,³ i.e., on the eve of the publication of the agreement, as also a copy of Sir A. Geddes' reply thereto.⁴

2. Your Lordship will note that Sir A. Geddes states in his reply that he was issuing to the American press an explanation of the principal points of the agreement in order to allay suspicion and prevent, so far as possible, misrepresentation of the terms of the arrangement, especially concerning Mesopotamia.⁵

¹ Not printed.

² The reference is to Paris telegram No. 852 of July 23, not printed. Cf. No. 286, n. 2.

³ No. 286.

⁴ No. 290. For Lord Curzon's note of Aug. 9, replying to the U.S. Government's representations of May 12 and July 28 (see No. 252, n. 2 and No. 290, n. 2), see *F.R.U.S.*, 1920, vol. ii, pp. 663-7.

⁵ In his despatch No. 993 of July 30 (not printed) Sir A. Geddes transmitted to Lord Curzon a copy of this explanatory statement which, he said, was in substance 'a résumé of your *en clair* telegram' (i.e. No. 286) and which appeared in the American press on July 30.

3. Sir A. Geddes suggests that the French Government might be warned of the misrepresentation and hostile propaganda to which the agreement, when published in the United States, is likely to give rise, and that it is most essential that they should, in their own interests, actively support the agreement before the American public. I fully concur in this suggestion.

4. It is, however, of primary importance that, to be useful, the explanations and support given by the French and British Governments should follow the same lines. The main features of the explanations furnished to Sir A. Geddes in my telegram of the 23rd instant for his Excellency's guidance are that, in regard to Mesopotamia, the agreement does not exclude other nations, neither does it reserve to Great Britain any exclusive rights, and that, so far as French participation is concerned, the French Government, in return for their consent to surrender their claims in the Mosul region, and for the grant of facilities for laying pipe-lines through Syria for the conveyance of oil from the Mesopotamian, and probably also from the Persian, oilfields to a port on the Mediterranean, have secured from Great Britain, as the Power ultimately responsible for the development of the Mesopotamian oilfields, a definite supply of oil.

5. In view of the importance that the French Government should join in supporting the agreement against the hostile criticism in the American press which will most likely be directed against it by the large American oil interests, I shall be glad if your Excellency will take the earliest opportunity of bringing the matter to the serious notice of the French Government and impressing on them how important it is, in their own interests, that the agreement should be actively supported.⁶

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

⁶ In his telegram No. 910 of Aug. 2 (not printed) Lord Derby reported having carried out these instructions and urged 'that instructions should be sent to French representative to concert with His Majesty's Ambassador in Washington'. Lord Curzon informed Sir A. Geddes accordingly in Foreign Office telegram No. 660 of Aug. 6, not printed.

No. 294

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received August 2, 9.15 p.m.)

No. 792 Telegraphic [E 9182/2/44]

Clear the line

CAIRO, August 2, 1920, 2.20 p.m.

High Commissioner Jerusalem has permitted Feisal to enter Palestine and reach Haifa.¹ He now presses that Feisal should visit me and adds that Feisal has on his own initiative asked to come to Alexandria to see me and ask my advice. To this I am opposed as stated in my telegram No. 787.² I have no advice to give Feisal, being unaware of future attitude of His Majesty's

¹ The Emir Feisal had reached Haifa on Aug. 1.

² Of Aug. 1, not printed.

Government towards him, and any reception of him by me would certainly make a bad impression on French.

I suggest that he should be conveyed to some station on Hedjaz Railway such as Amman and from there proceed to Medina.

If you consider it desirable Feisal should be received on behalf of His Majesty's Government, I submit under all circumstances it is preferable that High Commissioner Jerusalem should receive him.

Will you please telegraph instructions immediately.

Addressed to Foreign Office. Sent to Jerusalem.

No. 295

Mr. Vansittart (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received August 5)

No. 71 A [E 9427/4164/44]

PARIS, August 2, 1920

My Lord,

Your Lordship will remember that it was intimated at Spa that both the Mesopotamian and Palestine mandates were too complicated and might undesirably hamper us in administration;¹ they were therefore to be reduced so far as possible to general principles, and to be brought into harmony as far as the different circumstances permit, without any vital injury to Zionist interests but at the same time with greater care to avoid anything provocative to the other elements.

I have the honour to transmit herewith to Your Lordship a copy of the draft mandate for Palestine thus revised, and modified in the past few weeks after discussion with the French.² I have not yet been able to obtain the

¹ In a minute, dated July 31, Sir C. Hurst, Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, wrote: 'When we were on the journey to Spa, Mr. Philip Kerr told me that the Prime Minister did not like the Mesopotamia draft Mandate which had been circulated [to the Cabinet] on the 10th June, as he thought it tied the hands of H.M.G. too much. The Board of Trade had expressed dislike of the Palestine Mandate. These two new drafts were prepared at Spa to meet the above criticisms.'

² After repeated consultations with all the interested parties, consequent re-draftings, and, finally, approval by the Cabinet on Nov. 29, 1920, a draft mandate was submitted for the approval of the League of Nations on Dec. 7. This draft was printed as document No. 2 in Cmd. 1176 of 1921, *Draft Mandates for Mesopotamia and Palestine as submitted for the approval of the League of Nations*.

The main differences between the draft referred to above by Mr. Vansittart and document No. 2 in Cmd. 1176 were as follows:

(i) The Preamble of the earlier draft read:

'The undermentioned Plenipotentiaries of the Principal Allied Powers, duly authorised to that effect:

'For His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India:

and for the Dominion of Canada:
for the Commonwealth of Australia:
for the Dominion of New Zealand:

final Italian observations, but from the conversations I have already had I do not think any further real modification will be asked for.

I should add that the French are even now convinced that the terms of

for the Union of South Africa:
for India:
for the President of the French Republic:
for His Majesty the King of Italy:
for His Majesty the Emperor of Japan:

'Whereas by Article 132 of the Treaty of Peace signed at on the day of Turkey renounced in favour of the Principal Allied Powers all rights and title over Palestine, and . . .

[the two following paras. were identical with the text in Cmd. 1176]

'Recognising, moreover, the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute it their national home,

'Being agreed that in accordance with the above provisions His Britannic Majesty should be appointed the Mandatory for Palestine,

'Hereby declare that the Principal Allied Powers confer upon His Britannic Majesty a mandate to conduct the administration of Palestine, including the right to exercise as such mandatory all the powers inherent in the Government of a Sovereign State, save as they may be limited by the terms of the present mandate. His Britannic Majesty (hereinafter called the mandatory) accepts the mandate thus conferred upon him, and will exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations in conformity with the following provisions:—

(ii) Art. 1 read: 'The boundaries of Palestine shall be as follows: ,

(iii) Art. 2 read:

'A Boundary Commissioner shall be appointed by the Mandatory to trace on the spot in co-operation with a Boundary Commissioner appointed by each of the Mandatories for Syria and Mesopotamia and by the Government of Egypt the portion of the boundary laid down in the Annex between Palestine and those countries.

'In case any dispute should arise in connection with the work of the Commissioners, the question shall be referred to the Council of the League of Nations, whose decision shall be final.

'The final reports by the Commissioners shall give the definite description of this boundary as it has been actually demarcated on the ground; the necessary maps shall be annexed thereto and signed by the Commissioners. The reports, with their annexes, shall be made in triplicate; one copy shall be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations, one shall be kept by the mandatory and one by the other Government concerned.'

(iv) Arts. 3 and 4 corresponded to Arts. 2 and 3 in Cmd. 1176.

(v) Art. 5 corresponded to Art. 4 in Cmd. 1176 but the 2nd para. did not contain the words 'so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate'.

(vi) Arts. 6-8 corresponded to Arts. 5-7 in Cmd. 1176.

(vii) Art. 9 corresponded to Art. 8 in Cmd. 1176 but was shorter, reading: 'The immunities and privileges of foreigners resulting from the régime of the capitulations are abrogated in Palestine.'

(viii) Arts. 10-13 corresponded to Arts. 9-12 in Cmd. 1176.

(ix) Art. 14 (cf. Art. 13 in Cmd. 1176) read as follows after 'therewith': 'provided that nothing in this mandate shall be construed as conferring upon the mandatory authority to interfere with the fabric or the managing body of purely Moslem Sacred Shrines, the immunities of which are guaranteed.'

(x) Arts. 15-17 corresponded to Arts. 14-16 in Cmd. 1176.

(xi) Art. 18 corresponded to Art. 17 in Cmd. 1176 but the last para. is not in the earlier draft.

this mandate go much too far and contain the certainty of trouble. Though they are uneasy they regard that as our affair, and will not further press any objection.

This mandate differs considerably from the one submitted to Your Lordship in May.³ There are naturally modifications to which the Zionists will object; but on the other hand certain concessions have been made to their feelings, as in the Preamble wherein I have restored the phrase 'recognising the historical connection etc.' To this they have always attached great importance, and objected strongly when it was cut out. I think it might be restored without harm and this would make it easier for them to swallow the other less palatable alterations.⁴

Article 2. The machinery for tracing the frontiers should be the same as those in the Mesopotamian mandate, and if Your Lordship approves the suggestion made in my despatch No. 71 of August 2nd,⁵ I would suggest that this article be modified accordingly.

Article 5. The French urged that this article should be further 'reduced' as compared with the Spa draft. I have altered the wording of the first part, and I do not think it can be further modified compatibly with our policy toward Zionism.

Article 7. The French wished this developed to emphasise the protection of non-Jewish interests. I think, however, the article gives as much assurance as is required, or indeed possible without going into details which it is now our object to avoid.

Article 8. The French took exception to the whole of the nationality

(xii) Art. 19 corresponded to Art. 18 in Cmd. 1176 but the last para. is not in the earlier draft.

(xiii) Arts. 20-25 corresponded to Arts. 19-24 in Cmd. 1176.

(xiv) Art. 26 (cf. Arts. 25-27 in Cmd. 1176) read:

'The consent of the Council of the League of Nations is required for any modification of the terms of the present mandate.

'If any dispute whatever should arise between the Members of the League of Nations relating to the interpretation or the application of these provisions which cannot be settled by negotiation this dispute shall be submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice provided for by Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

'The present Declaration shall be submitted to the Council of the League of Nations for confirmation. It will come into force on such confirmation, and the present copy shall be deposited in the archives of the League of Nations. Certified copies shall be forwarded by the Secretary General of the League of Nations to all Powers, Signatories of the Treaty of Peace with Turkey.

'Made at the day of .'

³ Under cover of Mr. Vansittart's despatch No. 34 of May 12, not printed.

⁴ In a minute, dated Aug. 8, Lord Curzon commented as follows: 'It is a great pity that Mr. Vansittart should have acted independently about the preamble. Acting upon Mr. Vansittart's own advice I told Dr. Weizmann that I could not admit the phrase in the preamble and now I find that Mr. Vansittart has gone and put it back again. It is certain to be made the basis of all sorts of claims in the future. I do not myself recognise that the connection of the Jews with Palestine, which terminated 1200 years ago, gives them any claim whatsoever. On this principle we have a stronger claim to parts of France.'

⁵ Not printed. In this despatch Mr. Vansittart suggested that the French text of this Article should be adopted in the British mandate.

clauses in the draft of the mandate. They said they would not challenge them in the mandate, but that they would not recognise these provisions when they clashed with French laws, as they frequently would; and they expressed the opinion that this clause would lead us into difficulties with other countries beside France. In these circumstances I have thought it better to drop the former nationality clauses and replace them by the present short statement of principle. The details of the nationality laws will then be framed in due course by the Administration, as is done in any country. We shall certainly have less difficulty this way. I have spoken to Mr. Malkin⁶ and Mr. Cohen⁷ who both agree.

Article 9. If Your Lordship approves the suggestion in my despatch enclosing the Mesopotamian mandate,⁸ this article should be modified accordingly. The same remark applies to Article 18.

Article 20. I have altered the order of the languages putting Arabic before Hebrew in accordance with the suggestion of Sir H. Samuel. The French wanted it to be omitted altogether.

This mandate has also been put into the form of a declaration to avoid the trouble and delay of ratification. I feel there are no further observations that I can usefully offer on this oft-redrafted document. All that now remains is, if Your Lordship approves, to submit it to the Cabinet, after first showing it to the Zionists. The latter point is of some importance in order that they may not be able to say that any change has been made except with complete frankness. The Zionists will not of course like this document, but the changes affect neither their interests nor our policy toward them in any material way. I have always warned them that the original draft mandate might be too provocative to stand, and that it would have to be reduced to what we as mandatory considered was a safe start. I have added that though the letter of the mandate might be altered in immaterial details, our policy remained unaltered, and that the best way of carrying it out was to go quietly ahead without announcing all one's intentions with a red flag in advance. Unfortunately some of the Zionists find difficulty in shaking off the traditional hankering after jots and tittles. I do not think that the draft should be further altered unless they can produce very cogent objection to any part of it. They should, however, I venture to recommend, be given full opportunity to put forward their views—preferably in writing so as to avoid the illusion that we are going to begin again any process of redrafting, which occupied much of last year in their company.

Mr. Cohen recently called on me, and I told him the mandate was in course of remodelling on the lines described in paragraph 1 of this despatch. I added that I should send it as soon as possible to Your Lordship, who would, I felt sure, give instructions that he should be allowed to have a copy.⁹

⁶ Assistant Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office.

⁷ Mr. Israel Cohen, Director of Publicity at the Zionist Organisation Central Office in London.

⁸ i.e. despatch No. 71 of Aug. 2, referred to under 'Article 2' above, see n. 5.

⁹ In the minute referred to in n. 4 above Lord Curzon wrote: 'I greatly dislike giving the

I have only now to suggest that when the two mandates have been passed by the Cabinet, it might possibly be well that all three, Palestinian, Mesopotamian, Syrian, should pass to the League of Nations *via* the Drafting Committee in case any minor point of wording can thus be improved upon or harmonised.

Article 1 of this mandate leaves the Palestine frontier in blank. I am reporting on this matter in a separate despatch.¹⁰

I have, &c.,

ROBERT VANSITTART

draft to the Zionists, but in view of the indiscretions already committed I suppose that *this* is inevitable.' A note below recorded: 'Copy handed to Dr. Weizmann Aug. 9.' Dr. Weizmann had been elected President of the Zionist Organisation in July 1920.

¹⁰ No. 72 of Aug. 2, not printed.

No. 296

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received August 4, 11.20 a.m.)

No. 175 Telegraphic [E 9355/2/44]

Very urgent

JERUSALEM, August 3, 1920, 7 p.m.

Feisal does not wish to go to Hedjaz.¹ He wishes to go either to Switzerland or [*sic*] Italy, as he is 'ill' and wants rest, making own arrangements for journey and asks for no assistance from England.

Proposes to sail from Haifa on steamer which is neither British nor French. He does not wish to complicate matters between British and French nor does he wish to take any further steps against French.

Presume there is no objection.

Please telegraph.

Addressed to Foreign Office. Repeated to Alexandria.

¹ See No. 294. In his unnumbered despatch of Aug. 2 (not printed) Sir H. Samuel had reported that he had 'intimated to Feisal, who had not been led by me to expect any other answer, that it would be better if he proceeded direct to Mecca *via* Suez'.

No. 297

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 69 Telegraphic [E 9355/2/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 5, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 175 (of 3rd August.¹ Emir Feisal).

No objection. You should inform Feisal that His Majesty's Government appreciate his desire to create no complications between England and France. They are fully aware that he has made every effort to sustain a difficult position with due regard to the interests of the Allied Powers, and they trust that they may in the future have an opportunity of showing to him that his loyal attitude to the British Government has not been forgotten.

Repeated to Alexandria No. 711.

¹ No. 296.

No. 298

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 70 Telegraphic [E 9524/85/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 6, 1920, 4 p.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 156,¹ 161² and 164³.

Deraa town and station appear both to be north of Sykes-Picot line and cannot therefore be occupied by us. You will see from War Office telegram of 29th. July, No. 85780⁴ that I consider any immediate extension of our occupation in French sphere or French Arab sphere both unnecessary and unwise. There remains the question of possible occupation of Salt, Kerak, and possibly Amman. This would in my opinion be undesirable unless there is some clear indication that the French are endeavouring through the Damascus Government to extend their own influence south of Sykes-Picot line which runs a mile or two south of Deraa, Bosra eski Skam [Sham], and Sal-Khad. So long as Governor of Deraa maintains his present attitude there appears to be some risk of the French enforcing their claim over Deraa itself. This would result in a position by which he would be responsible to Damascus for areas north of line and question would arise whether remainder of his jurisdiction was under Damascus or not.

I suggest that you should let it be known forthwith that in area south of the line we will not admit French authority and that our policy is for this area to be independent but in closest relation with Palestine. Eastern boundary of Palestine will be fixed by agreement between us and French down to Sykes-Picot line but south of that line by agreement between us and local authorities.

Where is Emir Zeid now?

Is there any prospect of his being accepted as Emir of the area between Palestine and the Hejaz south of Sykes-Picot line? If so it might be desirable to negotiate boundaries etc. with him.

Repeated to Alexandria No. 717.

¹ Of July 29, not printed.

² In this telegram of July 30 (not printed) Sir H. Samuel had asked what were the views of H.M.G. 'as to future administration of country East of Palestine Frontier as finally fixed and South of French Zone?' ³ Of July 31, not printed. ⁴ Not printed.

No. 299

Earl Curzon to Count de Salis (Rome)

*No. 154 [E 9238/1136/44]**

Sir

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 6, 1920

I have received your despatch No. 82 of the 3rd July¹ and your telegram No. 35 of the 1st August² on the subject of the claim of the French Govern-

¹ No. 275.

² Not printed. This had referred to a report by M. Noblemaire, deputy for the Hautes-

ment to retain the privileges traditionally accorded to the French representative in Palestine in certain matters of liturgical ceremonial and precedence.

2. In the study of this question His Majesty's Government have been largely guided by their recognition of the obligation owed by Christendom and civilisation to France on account of her work in the past in the Holy Land, and by the hope that in co-operation with His Majesty's Government work of the same or even greater effective value may be done by the French Government and nation in the Palestine of the future. At the same time, His Majesty's Government have decided that these considerations must be subordinated to the paramount need in the interests of all sections in Palestine of a single supreme control being exercised in that country, not only in reality but also in appearance.

3. I would, therefore, request you to state very clearly to the Cardinal Secretary of State that His Majesty's Government hold the French renunciation of their protectorate over Roman Catholics in territories ceded by Turkey to the principal Allied powers to be absolute and complete and to cover all special rights and privileges connected with it. They cannot consent to recognise any claim on the part of France to retain any ceremonial precedence or other privileges whatever in Palestine. The enjoyment of these privileges has always hitherto been regarded as denoting some special authority on the part of the Government to whose representative they were accorded. Such a system was reasonable and justified in a country in which sovereignty was exercised by a Turkish Sultan. It would be altogether incompatible with, and derogatory to, the exercise of supreme authority, under the mandate, by Great Britain, and must therefore now be discontinued.

4. You should also make it clear to the Cardinal Secretary of State that His Majesty's Government would view unfavourably any suggestion that Catholic interests in the Holy Places should be represented through the good offices of the French agent, a device clearly calculated to result in the restoration of the idea of a French protectorate. The influence of the French nation in Palestine will be sufficiently secured by their many good works, and a memorial of the ancient relation of France to the Catholic peoples of Palestine will be found in the great sanctuaries which actually belong to the French Government, and in the great religious institutions which, without belonging to the French Republic, are nationally French.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

Alpes, on the resumption of French relations with the Vatican, in paragraph 2 of which it was stated that France, 'desiring to continue traditional policy of protection of Catholics in East, claims continuance of privileges and prerogatives always granted by church to official representatives of France in Palestine, Syria, Constantinople, and in all Levant'. Count de Salis had added: 'Report states further that on all points mentioned perfect agreement exists and that on May 28th all demands of French Government were assured of complete acquiescence of Holy See.'

No. 300

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 885 Telegraphic [E 9536/2/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 7, 1920, 3.20 p.m.

We have received information from Sir H. Samuel¹ that French have not merely occupied Kuneitra which they are entitled to do, but have appointed new Governors to Hauran, Salt, etc, and have summoned all Sheikhs as far as Kerak and² Damascus. Insofar as these territories lie in Area B which under Sykes-Picot Agreement is within British sphere, French, if they have acted in sense above reported, are violating terms of that Agreement, and you should at once call their attention to matter and say that we cannot recognise any French rights in that area.

Repeated to Jerusalem No. 74.

¹ In his telegram No. 178 of Aug. 6, not printed.

² The draft here read 'to'; cf. Vol. VIII, No. 83, minute 2 (p. 718).

No. 301

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received August 8, 10.30 a.m.)

No. 179 Telegraphic [E 9542/85/44]

Very urgent

JERUSALEM, August 7, 1920, 7.50 p.m.

Your telegram No. 70.¹

Records here define Sykes-Picot as line Tiberias-Bosrah eski Sham, map of one in 250,000 shows Deraa south of this. As to country southwards present Jordan line is very bad frontier strategically, economically, and politically. Please refer to my memorandum written before departure from London.² Information gathered here emphasizes conclusions. Territory up to Hedjaz railway could be administered through tribal organization supervised by two British district Governors and small staff.

Police force drawn from tribes with British officers.

Country agriculturally rich, revenue would cover cost of (? administration of) road-building (? stations) and leave considerable surplus after this year for general expenses of Palestine.

This year small cost of administration could be met by (? grain) taxes still un-collected and obtained without difficulty.

Very small number of troops required as occupation greatly desired by tribes and (? economics)³ in garrison of Palestine facilitated by better frontier. Political effect on all sections of population west of Jordan excellent because final recognised occupation would prevent raids being organised, would enable small parties of robbers to be arrested, would prevent possibility of

¹ No. 298.

² This memorandum of June 8 is not printed. It is the same as the letter referred to in the 'P.S.' to No. 267.

³ This word should probably read: 'economics'.

stoppage of Palestine food supplies as happened last year with disastrous effect on prices, and would prevent another power establishing influence there.

After fall of Damascus a fortnight ago leading Trans-Jordanian Sheiks came here to invite British occupation, are now leaving (? from) disappointment at no answer and disturbed at Constantinople reports of French propaganda throughout Trans-Jordania.

Could summon them all to fresh meeting where formal invitation would be given by them. These conclusions embody unanimous opinion of all my officers with knowledge of country and I can give assurance that occupation can be effected without fighting and maintained without additional expense: and am advised present tranquillity of country due to general expectations of British occupation. If decision delayed inter-tribal quarrels and disturbances almost inevitable with (? probable) development of French activity.

Zeid is in Haifa.

Will go with Feisal to Europe, informed him that ship available and . . .⁴ Oxford . . .⁴ Sheiks and tribes east of Jordan utterly dissatisfied with Shereefian Government most unlikely would accept revival on even less efficient basis and even smaller resources.

It would mean continuous disorder on our border. Zeid carries little weight and lacks personal qualifications needed to establish authority.

I suggest Hedjaz railway and sparse population eastward being under control of King of Hedjaz if undesirable to bring within our sphere.

General Congreve⁵ is in Egypt. General Shea⁶ has seen this telegram and entirely concurs.

Repeated to Alexandria. Please inform Egypt force.

⁴ The text is here uncertain.

⁵ Lt.-Gen. Sir W. N. Congreve, G.-O.-C., British Forces in Egypt.

⁶ Maj.-Gen. Sir J. S. M. Shea, of the Indian Army, senior Divisional General in Palestine.

No. 302

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received August 8, 10.10 p.m.)

No. 180 Telegraphic [E 9599/85/44]

Very urgent

JERUSALEM, August 7, 1920, 8.5 p.m.

Following for Lord Curzon.

Personal and private

Forgive my addressing personal message to you and Prime Minister.

Am deeply convinced that we shall be making grave error of policy if we do not now include Trans-Jordania in Palestine. It will certainly result in anarchy or French control across the border. Either would be disastrous and involve larger garrison here and greater expense. I should never advise Government to embark on military adventure. This is not such. Will Government authorise occupation if there is spontaneous formal and public demand from heads of all tribes and districts concerned?

Mr. Scott¹ (Alexandria) to Earl Curzon (Received August 10, 9 a.m.)

No. 816 Telegraphic [E 9671/9/44]

Very urgent

ALEXANDRIA, August 9, 1920, 7.45 p.m.

Your telegram No. 709.²

King Hussein now refuses to give any guarantees as to meeting Bin Saud, keeping peace or . . .³ as to purchase supplies. He complains that it would be beneath his dignity to give such undertakings in return (? for) £30,000⁴ which is 'only a part of subsidy already overdue', subsidy he says is payable without restrictions and adds that rather than accept conditions he will abdicate.

I have not yet given him information contained in Baghdad telegrams 9027 and 9028 as confirmation has not yet been received.⁵

In view of large Indian attendance including 1,000 Indian soldiers it is important to His Majesty's Government that Hajj⁶ should pass peacefully, if the King cannot pay his followers they will cause trouble on the routes. He has informed me that his troops at Medina threw down their arms because their pay was three months overdue.

On the other hand reports from Mecca indicate that the King is sending troops and munitions of war from Hedjaz to the North. It will be difficult to ensure that our money is not similarly employed.

However compared with subsidy he has received £30,000 is unlikely to leave him much margin to use for non-local purposes. Jeddah inform us that he is already making forced loans in the towns.

Provided Nejd pilgrimage is definitely cancelled I recommend that full amount be paid over with intimation that as Bin Saud is not proceeding King's acceptance of conditions is no longer necessary but that His Majesty's Government expects him to use money for purely local needs and not for anti-French purposes in the North. Also that he is expected to receive Nejd deputation. He knows that £30,000 is now available at Jeddah and if you direct that less is to be paid he should I think be notified at the same time that his subsidy has been reduced or stopped, as case may be, but I am not in favour of (? deprivation), stoppage or reduction except if made for punitive purposes. Can you inform me what the subsidy allotments for March to July inclusive are to be?

¹ Mr. E. Scott, H.M. Acting High Commissioner in Egypt from Aug. 5 to Nov. 12, 1920.

² Of Aug. 4, not printed. This instructed Lord Allenby to 'restrict payments to King Hussein to the smallest possible limits'.

³ The text is here uncertain.

⁴ Cf. No. 285.

⁵ Telegram No. 9027 of July 27 from Baghdad to Bahrein has not been traced in Foreign Office archives. No. 9028 of the same date, also to Bahrein, is not printed. According to the summary of contents on the file, in No. 9027 the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad, had reported having received a letter from Ibn Saud, 'protesting at having to limit number of pilgrims and armed men, and stating that if he cannot proceed with unlimited numbers he will abstain from pilgrimage, but send a small mission'.

⁶ i.e. the pilgrimage to Mecca.

*Record by Sir Eyre Crowe of a conversation with the
French Chargé d'Affaires*

[E 9822/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 10, 1920*

I spoke to M. de Fleuriau to-day on the subject of Emir Said's arrival at Beyrout in a French gunboat, and reminded him of the assurances recently given to Lord Curzon by M. Berthelot.¹

M. de Fleuriau assured me that those assurances would be fully respected. He explained that the French Government, having reason to be seriously dissatisfied with Emir Said, owing to his constant intrigues and injudicious behaviour in general, had taken him severely to task and warned him that whilst they would now permit him to return to Syria, he would be expelled and never allowed to set his foot there again if he did not cease all political activities and intrigues.

M. de Fleuriau proceeded to refer to Feisal, and said Lord Curzon at Lympne had consulted the French delegates whether the French Government would see any objection to our installing Feisal in Mesopotamia.² The French government, M. de Fleuriau said, indeed saw the very gravest objection, and he would shortly address a note to Lord Curzon, in reply to his enquiry, in which those objections would be explained.³ The French government had found Feisal to be altogether devoid of any authority over the Arabs in Syria. Not a finger had been raised in his support. We should similarly find that he had no standing in Mesopotamia. His power had been derived from the fact that he had arrived in the country as the head of a conquering army, or rather as an auxiliary of the English conquering army.

I said I preferred not to discuss the reason which led to Feisal being abandoned by the Syrian Arabs. My impression did not coincide with the view expressed by M. de Fleuriau. In my opinion the principal element of strength in Feisal's former position in Syria lay in the belief of the native population that he had the support of England, and also of France, in the project of setting up an independent Arab State. That belief was justified by the public declaration of the British and French governments.⁴ The Arabs had now realized that Feisal was unable to redeem the pledge that he would set up an independent Arab kingdom, and therefore, like true Orientals, they abandoned him.

But, I said again, I did not wish to argue this point; the British government was determined not to intervene between France and Feisal, whatever their view of the recent events in Syria. In return, I thought, the British

¹ For M. Berthelot's assurances see No. 289. The Emir Said had recently been allowed to leave Tunis for Beyrout *via* Constantinople, where, however, he was not permitted to land.

² See Vol. VIII, No. 83, minute 2.

³ This note, dated Aug. 17, is not printed.

⁴ Presumably a reference to the Anglo-French Declaration of Nov. 7, 1918; see No. 227, n. 6.

government would be a little surprised if the French government intervened in the question of the future government of Mesopotamia.

M. de Fleuriau interrupted me very quickly and said that, of course, the objections to Feisal being established in Mesopotamia, which were entertained by the French government, would be communicated only because Lord Curzon had invited an expression of their opinion, but it was for the British government to disregard those objections if they saw fit.

Our conversation was quite friendly.⁵

E. A. C.

⁵ Sir J. Tilley (an Assistant Secretary) and Lord Curzon minuted as follows:

'The fact that Feisal seems, for whatever reason, to have fallen so low in Syria and to have become a nonentity tells, I think, rather against the prospect of his success as a candidate for Mesopotamia. It would be a case of taking some one else's leavings.

J. A. C. TILLEY,
10.8'

'In that case why should the French be so frightened? C. 10.8.'

No. 305

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 80 Telegraphic [E 9542/85/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 11, 1920, 9 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 179¹ and your private telegram No. 180.²

French Government repudiate the suggestion that they are endeavouring to extend their influence into the British sphere. This being so, His Majesty's Government wish to avoid any appearance of exploiting the situation or of following French lead in Northern Syria. They are accordingly opposed to military occupation of Trans-Jordania. In any case War Office definitely refuse to furnish troops or undertake responsibility for subsequent commitments which might result.³ At the same time His Majesty's Government fully recognise the danger of allowing Trans-Jordania to relapse into a state of anarchy, and agree that any genuine wish on the part of the inhabitants for British help in local administration should be acceded to. We fear that the immediate inclusion under the Palestine administration as such of Trans-Jordania even within the Meinertzhagen line might give a handle to Nationalist agitators and result in a change of sentiment on the part of those who now express a wish for our advice and assistance. We would then be faced with a choice between withdrawal or military occupation which we are not prepared to contemplate. We have consulted Clayton and Deedes⁴

¹ No. 301.

² No. 302.

³ In a letter of Aug. 18 to Lord Hardinge (not printed) Sir H. J. Creedy, Secretary of the War Office, wrote that 'the Prime Minister expressed himself, in conversation with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, as strongly opposed to further action in Trans-Jordania which might increase the military commitments of British troops'.

⁴ Maj. J. M. Clayton was British Political Officer at Damascus; Col. (temporarily Brig.-Gen.) W. H. Deedes was Civil Secretary, Palestine Administration.

and are of opinion that the best means of securing a genuine and lasting desire for any extension of British administration towards the East is to give the people of Trans-Jordania an opportunity of realising gradually the benefits which this administration will give them.

The first step should be to send a few suitable political officers to such places as Salt and Kerak, provided that no military escorts are necessary to ensure their safety. Names of suitable officers can be suggested from here if you have none available, but appointments must for the present be limited to areas specifically recommended by you and approved by us.

The duties of these officers should be confined to encouraging local self-government and to giving such advice as is asked for by the people. They should assist in the formation of municipal and district self-governing bodies and lose no opportunity of encouraging trade with Palestine and of emphasizing the fact that Palestine is the natural outlet for Trans-Jordania. The inclusion of Trans-Jordanian districts in the administration of Palestine will be more easily effected when the people have had a better opportunity of expressing a definite and final desire to accept not only the advantages but also the obligations of British rule.

Repeated to Cairo No. 727.

No. 306

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received August 12, 2.30 p.m.)

No. 963 Telegraphic [E 9822/2/44]

Urgent

PARIS, August 12, 1920, 11.30 a.m.

Your telegram No. 885 of August 7th.¹

At interview with Secretary General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday Mr. Henderson² had intended to press for assurance that French action in Syria would not go beyond French rights under Sykes-Picot agreement.

In view however of reported intention of His Majesty's Government to make Feisal ruler of Mesopotamia (see my telegram No. 956 August 11th which will reach you by bag midday today)³ Mr. Henderson considered it wiser to refrain from any reference to subject.

If sovereignty of Mesopotamia were in fact offered to Feisal it would undoubtedly cause deep displeasure to French Government who would be quite capable in that case of (? at once) setting up Emir Said in Syria.

¹ No. 300.

² First Secretary in H.M. Embassy, Paris.

³ Not printed. The report alluded to by Lord Derby appeared in *Le Matin* of Aug. 11.

No. 307

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received August 13, 9.20 a.m.)

No. 187 (Part 1) Telegraphic [E 9860/2/44]

Very urgent

JERUSALEM, August 12, 1920, 7.15 p.m.

I telegraphed on August 11th to Political Officer Tiberias that British Government would not intervene east of zone north of Sykes-Picot line and deputations could not be received from there. Already however Sheikhs Fadl Muheimid and Far(? d) Ahmed had entered Palestine, and arrived here today with introduction from Feisal nominated by the meeting of 400 Sheikhs of Hauran and Ajlun and Kuneitra held ten days ago. They unanimously desire British protection and not French. Declared they would certainly resist French occupation and objected to division of their country. I replied reaffirming Sykes-Picot agreement east of Jordan saying that Britain could not repudiate agreement with France, they must clearly understand that (? they) could expect no countenance or assistance from us and strongly advised them to arrive at understanding with France. They pleaded for transmission of their views to London and for early reply as they expected French would (? occupy) country any day. I had previously seen French representative on another matter. I informed him of instructions I had sent to Tiberias, arrival of deputation and general line I should take.¹

End of Part I, part II follows.²

Addressed to Foreign Office, sent to Alexandria.

¹ An Italian translation of a letter of Aug. 16 from Sir H. Samuel to the Emir Feisal, informing him of the steps contemplated in Transjordan, is printed as No. 37 in Rossi, *Documenti*.

² No. 308 below.

No. 308

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received August 13, 9 a.m.)

No. 187 (Part 2) Telegraphic [E 9866/85/44]

Very urgent

JERUSALEM, August 12, 1920, 10.30 p.m.

Part 2 begins:—

One of the principal Sheiks and Mutessarif Kerak have been to Haifa on behalf of District to get Government's advice on situation. He (*sic*) gave none.

They asked me to-day whether to obey orders (? of) (? Damascus) Government who have dismissed Mutessarif . . .¹ £15,000 Kerak, 15,000 Salt towards French fine.

They urgently ask for British occupation and say that whole country desires it. In accordance with your instructions I advised them not to pay fine,—not to obey such orders—to govern themselves quietly until your decision arrives.

This situation cannot last.

¹ The text is here uncertain.

Universally anticipated that whole region deprived of all higher authority will quickly fall into anarchy. We shall then be bitterly reproached by population of both sides of Jordan for having rejected solution pressed on us by representatives of the people.

Sent to Alexandria No. 20 for G.H.Q.

No. 309

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received August 13, 3.5 p.m.)

No. 971 Telegraphic [E 9887/85/44]

PARIS, August 13, 1920, 12.40 p.m.

My telegram No. 963 of August 12th.¹

French Government are making enquiries at (? Beirut) and will inform me of result as soon as possible.

I am however assured report of intervention of French Authorities outside their sphere as described in your telegram No. 885 of August 7th.² is incorrect unless it be question of places on exact boundary between two mandates.

In private letter from Monsieur Kammere[r] it is pointed out His Majesty's Government have not yet agreed to proposals for definite delimitation of that boundary resulting from his conversations with Mr. Vansittart and that possibly High Commissioner is unaware of precise situation in this respect. Monsieur Kammere[r] refers to suggestion to set up Feisal as King of Mesopotamia and to the surprise and uneasiness caused to French Government thereby.

He adds that official protest on the subject is being communicated to Your Lordship by French Chargé d'Affaires in London.³

¹ No. 306.

² No. 300.

³ See No. 304, n. 3.

No. 310

Earl Curzon to Mr. Scott (Cairo)

No. 735 Telegraphic [E 9548/56/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 15, 1920, 10.30 a.m.

Information has been received from Paris that Hejaz delegation has not signed Peace Treaty.¹ It is desirable for many reasons that they should do so especially in view of effect of their abstention on Pan-Islamic movement. You should therefore endeavour to induce Hussein to give the necessary instructions. The best means would probably be an appeal to the King's vanity. You might point out to him importance of his participation in this resettlement of the Eastern world, explaining that recognition of the Hejaz as a free and independent state by Turkey is provided for in the Treaty and that it has always been the policy of His Majesty's Government to ensure

¹ i.e. the Treaty of Sèvres; see No. 118, n. 2.

this independence to their ally, King Hussein. His Majesty's Government had moreover intended, as soon as the independence of the Hejaz was regularized, to propose to King Hussein the opening of negotiations respecting the Hejaz-Palestine frontier. The refusal of the Hejaz to sign the Peace Treaty has however compromised that country's position and it is the wish of His Majesty's Government to rectify this. They therefore earnestly request King Hussein to depute a representative to sign the Treaty as soon as possible.

Please act accordingly if you concur.

No. 311

Count de Salis (Rome) to Earl Curzon (Received August 15, 6.50 p.m.)

No. 40 Telegraphic [E 9951/1136/44]

PALAZZO BORGHESE, ROME, August 15, 1920, 12.35 p.m.

Your telegram No. 28 of August 5th.¹

I have communicated your despatch No. 154² to Cardinal Secretary of State who expressed great satisfaction at receiving a statement of views of His Majesty's Government on these points in connection with French Protectorate. I think that Vatican were being very hard pressed by French, and that in Cardinal's opinion only reasonable and logical solution is one adopted by His Majesty's Government.

¹ Not printed.

² No. 299.

No. 312

Mr. Scott (Alexandria) to Earl Curzon (Received August 17, 9.20 p.m.)

No. 834 Telegraphic [E 9983/9/44]

Urgent

ALEXANDRIA, August 16, 1920, 8.40 p.m.

Your telegram No. 735.¹

If you consent to subsidy payment mentioned in my telegram No. 816² being made, I may possibly be able to get King to arrange for signature of treaty. He is however in a stubborn mood and considers French occupation of Damascus and their recent action in Syria are not in accordance with agreements under which he entered the war on the side of the allies.

I am convinced that so long as we withhold thirty thousand pounds now at Jeddah it will be useless to approach him. I do not of course guarantee that his signature can be bought at that price, but payment is certain to put him in better frame of mind.

Critical period of the Haj is approaching and if any payment is to be made it should be made now.³

¹ No. 310.

² No. 303.

³ In his telegram No. 746 of Aug. 20 (not printed) Lord Curzon informed Mr. Scott that the Treasury had sanctioned the payment 'on following conditions:—

A. That the Hedjaz sign the Treaty.

- B. That Hussein undertakes to receive with civility the Nejd deputation mentioned in Baghdad telegram 9027 [see No. 303, n. 5], and that they are enabled to purchase necessary supplies while at Mecca.
 - C. That all the money should be spent locally and that the Indian pilgrims should have no trouble on the Haj.
- 'To ensure carrying out of these conditions Treasury suggest money should be paid in instalments. . . .'

No. 313

Memorandum communicated by the Italian Ambassador on August 20, 1920

[E 10130/20/44]

Translation

ITALIAN EMBASSY, LONDON, August 16, 1920

The Italian Government has learnt, not without surprise, of an agreement come to on Italian territory on April 24 last between the British and French Governments, without the knowledge of the Italian Government, for the purpose of assuring to these two Governments a monopoly of the majority of the world's supply of petroleum.¹

Such agreements not only do not accord with the spirit of the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations, but are a grave menace to Italy's supply of fuel, which is vitally important for industry and navigation.

Relying on the friendly intentions of the Allied Governments, the Italian Government is confident that the British Government will be prepared to consider the advisability of beginning negotiations (in agreement with the French Government) in order to guarantee Italian interests in an adequate manner.

¹ See No. 286, n. 4. This agreement had been signed at San Remo; see Vol. VIII, p. 144.

No. 314

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received August 23, 12 noon)

No. 207 Telegraphic [E 10245/85/44]

Clear the line

JERUSALEM, August 22, 1920, 8 p.m.

Paragraph 1.

I proceeded to Salt August 20th. with escort of (? 50) Cavalry. Welcomed by population. For (? 10) hours received deputations from towns, villages and Tribes from Southern Adjlun to Akaba all asking for British administration. About 600 present at meeting, Saturday.¹ Had been told people would not declare themselves publicly unless assurance (? made) internationally that French would not enter as feared reprisals from them. In my speech I said that (? from) your telegrams No[s]. 74 and 80² first paragraph and Bonar Law's answer in House of Commons³ that [? it had been]⁴ agreed

¹ Aug. 21.

² Nos. 300 and 305.

³ See 133 H.C. 5 s., col. 200. Mr. Bonar Law was Lord Privy Seal.

⁴ These words are added in pencil on the filed copy.

between two Governments that area south of Sykes-Picot line . . .⁵ in our zone and not French and must therefore be separated from present Damascus Administration. I said that I had been asked to establish British Administration of Trans-Jordania and described kind of organization if established on lines of your telegram No. 80. would not be part of Palestine administration. No conscription, no disarmament, trade promoted. All these warmly applauded. Several representative speakers followed all strongly for British administration. One almost unknown Saltese asked for son of King Hussein as King. No support from Meeting. Leading Sheikhs had met previous evening and decided against that. At end, all pressed forward to give subscriptions in favour of British administration headed by principle [*sic*] Sheikhs of Kerak and Beni Adwan both Major Generals Sheriffian Army. Whole proceedings quite spontaneous.⁶ Have left Camp and Brunton⁷ and twelve Palestine Police at Salt. Beni received invitation too late to come. Sent telegram asking wishes. Have asked them to come to Salt to see Camp. Some tribes along Hedjaz Railway ask assurances for renewal of Turkish subsidy for guarding. Replied Railway Wakfs⁸ future administration undecided. Zionism not once mentioned to me at Salt. Impossible that desire for British administration could be more definite and unanimously expressed. Please telegraph immediate sanction for officers to proceed with these posts (*sic*) as country will no longer obey Damascus officers and authority must be established at once. Officers will be instructed to rely on own forces and if disturbances which cannot be (? control) . . .⁹ must not ask for British troops but must withdraw.

2. Since return have (? received) Go[u]raud's reply to my request mentioned in my telegram No. 189 delayed by slow communications.¹⁰ He accepts Sykes-Picot line east of Jordan as limit until question settled in Europe. Has caused instructions to be sent from Damascus to officials not to interfere with British action south of line.

On the receipt of your sanction under previous paragraph will ask him to withdraw Damascus officials not needed by us.

3. Will telegraph later consequential points detailed.

4. Hauran North of line likely to be disturbed. Do you approve of my answer to their delegates in my telegram No. 187?¹¹ Please telegraph precise definition of Sykes-Picot line East of Jordan.

Addressed to Foreign Office, sent to Alexandria.

⁵ The text is here uncertain. A pencilled note on the filed copy reads '? was'.

⁶ For a letter of Sept. 12 to H.M. King George V, in which Sir H. Samuel described this visit to Salt, see Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs*, pp. 159-60.

⁷ Mr. I. N. Camp and Capt. Brunton were Political Officers; cf. No. 305, para. 3.

⁸ i.e. Muslim religious trusts.

⁹ The text is here uncertain.

¹⁰ Of Aug. 14, not printed.

¹¹ Nos. 307 and 308.

No. 315

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 110 Telegraphic [E 10245/85/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 26, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 207.¹

His Majesty's Government have no desire to extend their responsibilities in Arab districts and must insist on strict adherence to the very limited assistance which we can offer to a native administration in Trans-Jordania as stated in my telegram No. 80 of August 11th.²

There must be no question of setting up any British Administration in that area and all that may be done at present is to send a maximum of four or five political officers with instructions on the lines laid down in my above-mentioned telegram.

I approve your reply to Sheikhs of Hauran. Definition of Sykes-Picot line will follow.

¹ No. 314.

² No. 305.

No. 316

*Record by Lord Hardinge of a conversation with the
French Chargé d'Affaires*

[E 10814/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 30, 1920

Monsieur de Fleuriau called this afternoon and handed me the accompanying long note from the French Government, relating to alleged intrigues by Emir Feisal and his journey to Europe.¹ The French Government fear that Feisal is counting on his appointment to the Kingdom of Mesopotamia, and that if his dreams are realised, he will be a cause of danger to their position in Syria. They are most anxious that no encouragement should be given to him, and particularly that he should not be allowed to come to England. The only point of interest contained in the note is the statement that under cover of his panarabic programme, Feisal and his Government, during the time that they were installed in Damascus, secretly asked for French co-operation with them against the English occupation of Mesopotamia.

I told M. de Fleuriau that we had done our utmost to prevent Feisal coming to Switzerland,² where it would be very undesirable that he should

¹ Not printed.

² In his telegram No. 371 of Aug. 28 (not printed) H.M. Ambassador at Rome, Sir G. Buchanan, reported an interview that morning between a member of the Embassy staff and the Emir Feisal who 'represented that he felt in great difficulty about his journey. He had hoped to accompany Mission which is being sent by his Father to thank His Majesty the King for presents sent . . . but had gathered that His Majesty's Government did not encourage this. He had applied to Lord Allenby before leaving for Europe but had received in

be in touch with the Young Turks, and other disloyal sections, that there was no question of inviting him to England, and that, as far as his candidature for the throne of Mesopotamia was concerned, Sir Percy Cox had just left for Bagdad with instructions to do what he could towards the restoration of order and the establishment of an Arab administration,³ without any reference being made to the candidature of the Emir Feisal.⁴

H.

reply expression of his regret that he could not see him at the moment. Now he wishes to go to London *via* Switzerland in order to avoid France and he is met with a message that he had better not go to Switzerland. He feels too "tired" to undertake journey by sea to England and he does not wish to remain in Italy.'

³ Sir P. Cox had in June been appointed Chief British Representative in Mesopotamia: in October he became H.M. High Commissioner at Bagdad. Cf. No. 450 below.

⁴ Lord Curzon commented as follows:

'Next time the French come round with their representations about Feisal might it not be worth while to remind them that they have never done anything to meet my repeated representations about the hostile attitude of their M. Bonin [the French Minister] at Teheran? C. 31/8.'

Lord Hardinge spoke accordingly on Sept. 3 and recorded that M. de Fleuriau had replied that 'he would at once report to his Government what I had said, but that he hoped that you and I would understand the great difficulty of removing Monsieur Bonin at the present moment or sending anybody to replace him there; for the last few months the question had been under discussion whether Europeans would not have to retire from Tehran, and the evacuation of French subjects could hardly be successfully carried out except by the actual French Minister, since a newly appointed Minister would have neither the knowledge nor the experience. I told him I would report to you [i.e. Lord Curzon] what he had said, but that I hoped he would bring my remarks to the notice of Monsieur Millerand.' For further references to M. Bonin see Nos. 448 and 467 below.

Lord Curzon noted: 'The French Govt. did withdraw M. Bonin nearly a year ago, but then at the last moment ordered him to stay. C. 4/9.'

No. 317

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 121 Telegraphic [E 10639/85/44]

Clear the line

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 31, 1920, 7.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 229.¹

You must bear in mind that frontier negotiations with French are not yet terminated; terms of any agreement you may make for transfer of Deraa-Semakh must not therefore imply the contrary.

Sykes-Picot line was so vaguely drawn that it cannot be accurately defined.

¹ Of Aug. 30, not printed.

Note from Earl Curzon to the Italian Ambassador

[E 11058/20/44]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 17, 1920*

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 16th ultimo,¹ in which your Excellency was good enough to convey to me the views of the Italian Government regarding the oil agreement concluded between His Majesty's and the French Governments, and also the suggestion that His Majesty's Government, in agreement with the French Government, might be disposed to enter into negotiations with the Italian Government in order to guarantee Italian interests.

2. In reply, I have the honour to observe that the views which appear to be entertained in regard to the agreement are not a little surprising, and may possibly be due to the Italian Government having had no opportunity of obtaining full acquaintance with the nature and object of an arrangement which is the result of negotiations entered into long before the date of signature and which in no way aims at the acquisition by the signatories of exclusive rights in any country.

3. In view of the fact that the United States control over 80 per cent. of the oil production of the world, and consequently practically hold, and will hold for a very long time to come, a preponderant position, it is certainly not easy to conceive the reason which has led the Italian Government to the conclusion that the Anglo-French agreement can have been negotiated with a view to assure to Great Britain and to France a monopoly of the greater part of the world's supply.

4. The arrangement which has been come to between His Majesty's and the French Governments, and which has been published, is based essentially on principles of co-operation and reciprocity in countries where British and French interests are already very considerable—greater perhaps than those of other Allied countries—and where British and French subjects may reasonably be expected to seek new concessions. Full recognition has been given to the importance of concessions being in the hands of serious and responsible firms, and provision has therefore been made in the agreement for giving support to such firms.

5. The provisions of the agreement, in so far as Mesopotamia is concerned, are reciprocal in character, and are the outcome of the recognition of long-standing French interests in the Mosul vilayet.

6. In consequence of the renunciation by France of those interests, and of the consent of the French Government to the laying, when necessary, of a pipe-line from Mesopotamia through French mandated territory in Syria to a port on the Mediterranean, and the grant of other important facilities, the French Government will receive in return a certain share of the oil

¹ No. 313.

produced from the Mesopotamian oil-fields, if they are developed by State agency, or a participation in any company which may be formed to develop those oil-fields, if it be decided to have recourse to private enterprise.²

7. The practical result of this arrangement is that, by French participation, the Mesopotamian Government secures important facilities for the transport of oil to the Mediterranean, and will thus be enabled to place the product of the oil-fields within easy reach of the European markets.

8. The agreement, as I have already had the honour to state, aims at no exclusive rights in any country. Its terms, moreover, cannot in the slightest degree be considered as a violation of the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Far from being, as you have stated, a menace to Italy's supply of fuel, it will, in its operation, contribute in a large measure to the increase of world production and supply, and will thus afford to Italy, as well as to other countries, more and wider opportunities than ever for obtaining adequate fuel supplies for industrial and shipping purposes.

I have, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

² Sir J. Tilley wrote as follows in the margin of the draft of this note: 'This is in accord with the wording of the French agreement. As a matter of fact the Company exists. J. A. C. T.'

No. 319

Mr. Scott (Cairo) to Earl Curzon (Received September 24, 10.30 a.m.)

No. 933 Telegraphic [E 11815/9/44]

CAIRO, *September 23, 1920, 2.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 868.¹

King Hussein has stated that if His Majesty's Government will fulfil its agreements, he is ready to instruct Lutfallah² to sign Peace Treaty.

In a conversation with Sadik Pasha³ he referred to our refusal of aeroplanes⁴ and to Colonel Vickery's neglect to answer his question as to whether Great Britain stands by its undertakings with him.⁵ He complained that all his protests remain unanswered and said that after Prime Minister's refusal to meet Feisal he can only resign.

¹ Of Sept. 1, not printed.

² Habib Lotfallah, head of the Hedjaz Peace Delegation in Paris.

³ Egyptian Staff Officer of the British Agent at Jeddah.

⁴ In his telegram No. 604 of June 20 (not printed) Lord Allenby had reported having refused a request by King Hussein for twelve aeroplanes and twelve armoured cars in view of Wahabi raids on the Mecca-Medina road.

⁵ The reference is presumably to the questions put by King Hussein to the Heads of the Allied Missions at Jeddah on July 17, namely (1) whether the Allied Powers now regarded the Arabs as friends or enemies and (2) what was the reason for the French ultimatum to the Emir Feisal. On Aug. 17 Sir J. Tilley informed the Italian Ambassador in London that 'in view of subsequent developments in the Syrian situation' H.M.G. did not propose to return any reply.

Emir Abdullah has tried to exercise moderating influence but explains that he is powerless.

Sent to Bagdad.

No. 320

Record by Lord Hardinge of a conversation with the French Ambassador

[E 11876/2/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 23, 1920*

In accordance with your [Lord Curzon's] instructions I spoke to M. Cambon this afternoon with regard to the presence of Feisal in Italy, and I urged upon him the advisability of allowing Feisal to come to this country. I pointed out to him that at the present moment Feisal was in Italy, where we knew the Italians would be likely to intrigue with him in connection with Arab affairs. It was equally undesirable that Feisal should go to Switzerland, where he would be in contact with the Committee of Union and Progress;¹ it was obvious that he would not care to remain in France, nor would the French probably wish to have him in their territory: consequently it would be far better that he should come to England, where he would probably spend the winter at the sea-side, and where we would be quite certain that he would not be in a position to carry on intrigues hostile to French or British interests in Syria or the Hedjaz. I said that it was necessary to treat a question of this kind on broad lines, and I wished to remind him that we had always deferred to French susceptibilities, while it could not be said that the French had shown the same consideration towards us in Tehran.²

Monsieur Cambon remarked that Switzerland was in his opinion even more dangerous as a residence for Feisal than Italy. He would put the case as strongly as he could before his Government, but he thought he would not be able to get a satisfactory reply for four or five days since to request an immediate answer would be certain to meet with a refusal from some bureaucrat at the Quai d'Orsay.³

H.

¹ See No. 14, n. 2.

² Cf. No. 316, n. 4.

³ On Oct. 5 a letter was sent by the Foreign Office to M. Cambon asking him to urge his Government to return 'a very early and favourable reply'. See No. 325 below.

No. 321

Earl Curzon to Mr. Scott (Cairo)

No. 835 Telegraphic [E 11854/9/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 28, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 933.¹

1. You are authorised to pay King Hussein £10,000 at once provided that an undertaking is given that the money shall only be spent in the Hedjaz.

¹ No. 319.

2. A further instalment of £10,000 is sanctioned upon the King's undertaking to sign the Peace Treaty, the remaining £10,000 to be paid when he actually does so.

3. It is undesirable, however, that it should appear that we are endeavouring actually to purchase the King's signature to the Treaty. Major Batten² should therefore be instructed not to make any communication in the sense of paragraph 2 above officially, but to approach King Hussein as from himself, and to represent as his own, the view that His Majesty's Government would probably not place any obstacle in the way of further payments, if King Hussein would collaborate with them in expediting the settlement of the Middle East, by instructing the Hedjaz Delegation to sign the Turkish Treaty. Major Batten should, moreover, only act in this sense on condition that he considers the desired result is likely to be obtained.

² Acting British Agent at Jeddah.

No. 322

Earl Curzon to Mr. Vansittart (Paris)

*No. 157 [E 11698/4164/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 30, 1920*

Sir,

With reference to your despatch No. 70 of the 27th July,¹ and private correspondence with Major Young,² I have to inform you that the text of the Anglo-French 'projet de convention' and the question of the frontiers between the French and British mandatory areas have been considered by an Inter-Departmental Committee at the Foreign Office,³ and I now transmit to you the following instructions for the resumption of your negotiations with the French Foreign Office.

Beginning with the northern frontier of Palestine, where your principal difficulty will probably arise, the Committee laid special emphasis on the importance of safeguarding the water supply of Palestine, and pointed out that the frontier as defined in the French draft mandate for Syria (enclosure 2 in your despatch No. 71 [A] of the 2nd August)⁴ left the control of the Litani river and of the head-waters of the Jordan entirely within the French mandated area. It was realised that the French would not discuss any alteration of the frontier affecting their control of the waters of the Litani and it was, therefore, considered all the more essential to press for a readjustment which would give to Palestine a fuller control over the head-waters of the Jordan, and especially of the Yarmouk, which is its principal feeder.

¹ Not printed. This enclosed the text of the Anglo-French 'projet de convention' mentioned below.

² See, e.g., No. 272. The rest of this correspondence is not here printed.

³ This Inter-departmental Committee held its first meeting on Aug. 1. It had discussed the frontiers of Palestine and Mesopotamia at its 3rd, 5th, and 8th meetings on Aug. 17, 24, and 31 respectively, and the mandates for these territories at its 5th, 6th, 8th, and 9th meetings on Aug. 24, 25, 31, and Sept. 3 respectively.

⁴ See No. 295.

You should, therefore, do your best to secure as the frontier of Palestine the following line, which is based on the suggestions originally submitted by Colonel Meinertzhagen, modified to exclude the Litani river, for which it is considered useless to press:—

‘A line running east of Ras-el-Nakura on the coast to the hills about 5 miles west of Lake Hule, thence north along the divide between the Litani and the Nahr Hasbani to El Bire, thence along the “Meinertzhagen line” to the Yarmouk river, (map reference, Palestine 1/250,000).’

In the event of the French proving uncompromising, and refusing to admit of such a readjustment of the frontier proposed in their draft mandate for Syria (enclosure 2 in your despatch No. 71 of the 2nd August), you should insist on:—

- (a) The insertion in the Anglo-French ‘projet de convention,’ enclosed in your despatch No. 70 of the 27th July, of some clause, by which the waters of the Yarmouk and Litani (see below) are secured for the use of Palestine.
- (b) An area on the southern shore of the Lake of Galilee at Semakh of sufficient extent to permit of the construction of a railway station with unimpeded access to the waters of the lake.
- (c) An amendment of the last paragraph of article 6 of the Anglo-French ‘projet de convention,’ in the sense of the enclosed memorandum by Sir H. Llewellyn [*sic*] Smith⁵ and General Mance.
- (d) The erasure from the French description of the frontier of any dependence of the *tracé* on the position of particular tribes, such as is suggested in the last sentence of the penultimate paragraph of article 1 of the French draft mandate for Syria.
- (e) The retention of our railway rights in the polygon provided for in the Sykes-Picot Agreement.⁶

The requirements of future railway and pipe-line communication between Palestine and Mesopotamia are not fully provided for by either of the arrangements set forth in article 6 of the ‘projet de convention.’ It is probable that the solution lies in the construction of a railway further south up the Wadi Zerka, but in the meantime we should hold to our rights as accorded in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, unless the French are ready to meet us on the question of the Palestine water supply, by conceding the frontier desired by His Majesty’s Government.

The frontier between Syria and Mesopotamia as laid down in the French draft mandate for Syria can be accepted.

A further despatch will follow at an early date containing instructions regarding the draft declarations constituting the mandates for Palestine, Mesopotamia and Syria. The amended drafts of these declarations in the

⁵ Member of the Economic Committee of the League of Nations. See enclosure below.

⁶ These instructions sent to Mr. Vansittart concerning the Palestine-Syria frontier were summarized in Lord Curzon’s telegrams Nos. 164 and 165 of Sept. 28 to Sir H. Samuel, not printed.

case of Palestine and Mesopotamia are now before the Cabinet. The description of the frontiers, when agreed upon, will be inserted in the appropriate articles of the three mandates, but there remains a difficulty regarding the frontiers of Mesopotamia and Palestine, to which I think it well now to call your attention.

The mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia as originally drafted assumed that the two areas were coterminous, but, although it was no doubt contemplated that the whole of the country between Palestine and Mesopotamia should come under British mandate, serious inconvenience might follow from defining either of them as extending far into the desert. This intervening territory forms area B, as defined in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which was to form a part of an Arab State to be set up under Anglo-French auspices, but which does not now appear likely to materialise. In fact, His Majesty's Government are already treating 'Trans-Jordania' as separate from the Damascus State, while at the same time avoiding any definite connection between it and Palestine, thus leaving the way open for the establishment there, should it become advisable, of some form of independent Arab Government, perhaps by arrangement with King Hussein or other Arab chiefs concerned.

A possible course would be to define the boundaries of Palestine proper and of Mesopotamia proper in the mandates, leaving the intervening territory for future arrangement, but this would at once raise the question of the status of the intervening territory, and might deprive us of the power to safeguard British political predominance in that area.

For the present, therefore, it is considered that we should define the boundaries of—

1. Palestine, only so far as they march with Syria and Egypt.
2. Mesopotamia, only so far as they march with Syria, Persia and the Persian Gulf, leaving the eastern boundary of Palestine and the south-western boundary of Mesopotamia for subsequent definition when the situation as regards Arabia has developed further.

I would add that a fresh article has now been proposed by the French Embassy here for insertion in the Anglo-French 'projet de convention,' dealing with existing British and French schools. A copy of this article is enclosed herein,⁷ and on this copy an amendment is indicated which will bring the article into conformity with the mandates. You can hardly take the question of this article up, however, until you receive copies of the mandates in the form finally approved, but you should not then accept the article unless the French Government accept the amendment. As stated above, you should, failing satisfaction regarding the frontier, use your best endeavours to secure the agreement of the French Government to the insertion in the 'projet de convention' of the clause, regarding the utilisation of the Litani waters by Palestine, enclosed in your letter of the 29th June to Major Young,⁸ or of any clause similar to this and acceptable to the French Government. This

⁷ Not printed.

⁸ Enclosure 2 in No. 272.

clause might be expanded to cover utilisation of the head-waters of the Yarmouk also.

For a fuller explanation of the reasons underlying the above instructions you should refer to the minutes of the discussions of the Inter-Departmental Committee at the Foreign Office, copies of which have already been sent to you.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

ENCLOSURE IN No. 322

YARMOUK VALLEY

*Proposed Amendment to the Draft Anglo-French Agreement, as suggested by
Sir H. Llewellyn Smith*

Article 6.—Omit the last paragraph down to and including ‘jusqu’à Deraa,’ and substitute the following:—

‘The French Government also undertakes to facilitate by a liberal arrangement the common use of the section of the existing railway between Lake Tiberias and Deraa. This arrangement, which shall be the subject of a special agreement between the railway administrations in the British and French zones, shall ensure (*inter alia*) the right of the administration in the British zone to run their own trains, with their own traction and train crews, over the above section of the railway in both directions for purposes other than local traffic, and shall determine the technical, financial, and administrative conditions under which these running powers shall be exercised.

‘This agreement shall take effect not later than (three months) after the coming into force of the French and British mandates. If the administrations are unable to come to a complete agreement before that date, the points of difference shall be settled on the application of either side by an umpire appointed by the Council of the League of Nations, and meanwhile effect shall be given to such part of the agreement as can be put into force provisionally while awaiting the umpire’s decision. The agreement shall remain permanently in force subject to revision from time to time by mutual consent.’

Continue as in French text (omitting words ‘En ce cas’): ‘Le Gouvernement britannique . . . sous mandat français.’

No. 323

Mr. Scott (Ramleh) to Earl Curzon (Received October 12)

No. 1110 [E 12529/9/44]

RAMLEH, September 30, 1920

My Lord,

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that I consider that it is now clear that King Husein’s attitude towards His Majesty’s Government has become one of studied obstruction.

The decisions announced after the San Remo Conference,¹ although they could not have come as a complete surprise to the King, were a keen disappointment to him and led him to give open expression to the mistrust of the good intentions of His Majesty's Government which he had been harbouring since the time of the Peace Discussions in Paris. I believe, however, that in spite of those decisions, it would still have been possible to appease him had the French *coup de force* at Damascus not taken place. That incident, or rather our tacit approval of it, has, I am afraid, rendered the continuance of friendly relations with King Husein impossible.

The King's outstanding act of disrespect towards His Majesty's Government was his blunt refusal in June last to allow Major Marshall² to control the Quarantine Administration at Jeddah. This was followed by other acts of disloyalty and obstruction such as his refusal to give guarantees for the safety of the Nejd pilgrims, his hostile treatment of our Political Officer at Mecca, his neglect of the comfort of the Indian soldier pilgrims who were his guests during the Hajj, his general disregard for the welfare and health of Indian civil pilgrims, his refusal to allow the despatch to Mecca of the Indian Field Hospital which had been obtained specially from India with his previous concurrence, his summary dismissal of Dr. Shushta, the Egyptian Bacteriologist, on the very trivial ground that the doctor had placed sick Indian civil pilgrims in the Indian Field Hospital instead of in the insanitary Hejaz Government Hospital, and, finally, his refusal to sign the Peace Treaty.

Some of these incidents in themselves are not important, but taken collectively they show an evident intention to run counter to our wishes and requests, and they denote a decided departure from his previous friendly attitude towards us.

Although the desire to preserve his sovereign prerogatives is an important factor in determining his attitude, our support of the French is the chief one, and this support he has of course detected in our silence since the Damascus events, in the stoppage of his subsidy,³ and in the alleged refusal of the Prime Minister to see Emir Feisal.⁴

It is not surprising therefore that he has been tempted to listen to the pleadings of Mustapha Kamal and that he is endeavouring to give support to tribesmen of the north in their efforts to eject the French troops.⁵ In this connection it is noteworthy that he has several times lately announced that it was the Committee of Union and Progress⁶ and not the Turkish Government against which he revolted.

The change in King Husein's feelings has found expression in his threats to abdicate which have become more frequent of late, and I believe it cannot be long before he will insist on carrying out the intention.

¹ See No. 243.

² Maj. W. E. Marshall, British Director of Hedjaz Quarantine; cf. No. 262, n. 1.

³ Cf. No. 312, n. 3, and No. 321.

⁴ See No. 319.

⁵ In his telegram No. 966 of Sept. 30 (not printed) Mr. Scott reported that, 'although no absolute proof is available', information from different sources pointed to King Hussein's being in communication with Mustapha Kemal Pasha.

⁶ See No. 14, n. 2.

It can only be concluded from his recent behaviour that he is endeavouring to goad His Majesty's Government into deposing him, a proceeding which, although it would doubtless give satisfaction to Moslems in most parts of the world, not excluding the Hejaz, would certainly bring criticism on us as an interference with the much advertised independence of the newly created Hejaz State.

If he could manage to secure our approval of his abdication, he would no doubt use the fact afterwards to prove to the world that the independence of the Hejaz was in reality a myth.

At the same time I would add that I think that if King Husein presents us with a *fait accompli* and applies for a passage from the Hejaz, His Majesty's Government would be well advised to grant him the facility.

The question of a successor is, however, still one of difficulty. Should Emir Ali succeed it is certain that the present unsatisfactory conditions of government in the Hejaz would be maintained, in fact they might become worse, as Ali, who understudies his father, lacks his force of character, his ability, and his capacity to refuse the monetary demands of sycophants.

It would be much more desirable from the point of view of His Majesty's Government for either Emir Feisal or Emir Abdullah to succeed to the throne, but it is not easy to see how this could be brought about. It is not, however, impossible that local public opinion would express itself in favour of one of them.

The question of the King's Subsidy requires consideration in the light of his recent actions. Reports show that he is hard pressed for money, but he continues to obtain his requirements by forced loans (which are never repaid) from the merchants, many of whom, it must be pointed out, are Indian subjects. It appears that he is still able to maintain expensive missions to Europe, to send large gifts to insurrectionary chiefs outside his territory (such as Ibn Aidh), and to pay fresh troops for employment outside the Hejaz.

I think, however, that the complete stoppage of the subsidy would in itself inevitably result in his downfall, but that with his successor, who I consider could not carry on without financial assistance, His Majesty's Government might be able to fix rigid conditions for its issue and employment.⁷

A copy of this Despatch is being sent to Jerusalem, Baghdad, Aden and Jeddah.

I have, &c.,
ERNEST SCOTT

⁷ In the course of a minute dated Oct. 14 Lord Curzon commented: 'I have long held the view that the resignation of King Hussein is not only inevitable but may even not be a misfortune.'

No. 324

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received October 3, 9.30 a.m.)

No. 279 Telegraphic [E 12111/85/44]

Very urgent

JERUSALEM, October 2, 1920, 6.10 p.m.

Your telegram No. 164.¹

Following points essential in the interests of Palestine. 1. Control over banks of Jordan (? between) Lake Huleh and Tiberias on account of water power schemes. 2. Undivided control over Semakh on account of Lake Tiberias communications. 3. If Deraa Semakh railway not in British sphere, effective arrangements to secure transport of goods to and from Palestine on terms as . . .² as granted to trade with Damascus as regards rates and provision of rolling stock. Otherwise Hauran and other Trans-Jordanian trade which has Haifa as natural outlet will be arbitrarily diverted to Beyrout and interests of Haifa port and Palestine railways gravely prejudiced. 4. Desirable also that whole of Lake Tiberias be within Palestine. Divided control of water would give rise to administrative difficulties. 5. Hope arrangements previously contemplated can be effected enabling Palestine to draw portion of Litani water if needed in the future.³

¹ Of Sept. 28, not printed.

² The text is here uncertain.

³ In his telegram No. 171 of Oct. 4 (not printed) Lord Curzon replied that Mr. Vansittart was being informed, but that all these points were already covered in the full instructions sent to him [No. 322], 'in so far as this was considered possible having regard to the fact that we are, as you know, in a weak bargaining position in these negotiations'.

No. 325

Note from the French Chargé d'Affaires to Earl Curzon

[E 12455/2/44]

Urgent

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE À LONDRES, 9 octobre 1920

Par une note en date du 5 de ce mois,¹ Son Excellence le Principal Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires Étrangères a bien voulu faire savoir à Monsieur Paul Cambon que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté désirerait autoriser l'Emir Feysal à se rendre en Angleterre au cours de cet hiver.

Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères ne doute pas que le Gouvernement britannique soit disposé à prendre toutes mesures utiles pour isoler l'Emir Feysal et empêcher que des intrigues aussi préjudiciables à l'Angleterre qu'à la France se nouent autour de lui. Toutefois, Monsieur Leygues² estime que l'impression produite sur l'opinion en France et en Orient par l'autorisation donnée à Feysal de se rendre en Grande Bretagne serait de nature à créer un grave malentendu et risquerait d'être exploitée par nos ennemis comme la marque d'un désaccord entre nos deux Gouvernements.

¹ See No. 320 and No. 320, n. 2.

² French President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

D'autre part, le Gouvernement de la République craint que l'admission sur le sol britannique de l'Emir arabe ne soit pour lui un encouragement dangereux, de même que toute marque d'attention donnée à un personnage qui a mené contre les troupes françaises et les mandats internationaux en Syrie une campagne hostile.

Le Chargé d'Affaires de France a reçu pour instruction de rappeler à Son Excellence le Principal Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires Étrangères que cette question a déjà été soulevée à la dernière conférence de Lymgne où Monsieur Millerand a exposé avec une grande force les objections que soulevait l'éventualité de la venue de Feysal à Londres.³ Le Gouvernement français ne peut que maintenir son point de vue à ce sujet.

Monsieur de Fleuriau saisit, etc.

³ See Vol. VIII, No. 83, minute 2.

No. 326

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received November 1)

No. 92 [13506/85/44]

JERUSALEM, October 12, 1920

My Lord,

General Gouraud informed me recently that he desired to send his Secretary General, Monsieur Robert de Caix, to see me in order to 'prendre contacte [*sic*]' and discuss matters of mutual interest. Monsieur de Caix had a conversation with me today.¹ He expressed the great desire of the French in Syria to work in close and cordial co-operation with this Administration, and after my responding in a similar sense a number of points of mutual interest were discussed.

(1) Monsieur de Caix made a complaint as to the attitude of some of our officers in encouraging anti-French movements among the native population particularly in Trans-Jordania. In answer to my request for specific instances he mentioned a document which he had seen in Damascus in which Major Somerset, now acting as British Representative in Ajlun, had agreed to a number of requests from the Sheikhs of the District, some of them of an anti-French tendency. I was able to show Monsieur de Caix a copy of the requests of the Sheikhs which corresponded with the paper which he had seen, and also of Major Somerset's replies which were far from being an acceptance of those to which he specially referred.²

I pointed out that the control of our officers in Trans-Jordania was very

¹ This conversation was very briefly summarized in Sir H. Samuel's telegram No. 239 of Oct. 12, received in the Foreign Office at 9.35 a.m. on Oct. 13, not printed.

² In a letter of Nov. 10 to Gen. Gouraud (copy of which was transmitted to the Foreign Office under cover of Sir H. Samuel's despatch No. 181 of Dec. 6, not printed) Sir H. Samuel set out the fourteen points raised by the Sheikhs at a meeting at Um Qeis in Sept. 1920, together with Major Somerset's answers and his own comments. The so-called 'Trattato di Umm Qais', printed as No. 39 in Rossi, *Documenti*, is based on Major Somerset's replies.

limited, since we had no troops there and were proceeding on lines of self-government. They had, however, actively deterred the people of Trans-Jordania from joining in the armed movement in the Hauran against the French, as I myself had done in answer to enquiries from the Sheikhs at that time as to the course that they ought to pursue, and that in fact hardly anyone from Trans-Jordania had joined in that movement. Monsieur de Caix recognised that that was so, and said that they similarly had issued definite instructions to their officers that they were to take no action which would be inconvenient to the British Administration South of the line.

(2) He suggested that if any fresh constitution were established in Trans-Jordania the French authorities in Syria might be consulted informally beforehand, as although he quite recognised that they had no right to ask to be so consulted on matters within the British sphere, he thought it would be useful in order to prevent contradictory policies in the two Zones. I said I should be glad to consider this suggestion when the occasion arose.

With respect to British troops in Trans-Jordania they would much prefer that we should send troops there as it would tend to prevent troubles in their Zone arising from across the border. In answer to my question whether I might report that to the Foreign Office as the view of the French authorities he said that I might certainly do so, and that indeed General Gouraud had already sent a communication in that sense which he understood had been transmitted to the Foreign Office.

(3) With respect to the Hejaz Railway it was his view that it should be run under British control from Deraa Southwards while they would undertake the running of the Northern section, due regard being paid to Moslem susceptibilities arising from the fact that the railway was Wakf. I said in that connexion that our capacity of being of assistance in running the Hejaz Railway from Deraa Southwards must depend upon our having free use of the Railway from Haifa to Deraa for the transport of coal. He said that there would be no difficulty whatever about that, and with respect to the Haifa-Deraa Railway generally he thought that there would be no difficulty in arriving at an understanding. His view was, and he thought it was that of the French Authorities also, although there were some short-sighted people among them who opposed it, that the trade which had found its natural outlet through the Port of Haifa should continue to do so. No attempt would be made by the French to divert it artificially to Beyrout. He regarded Damascus, however, as the natural hinterland of Beyrout, while the Deraa region stood in the same relation to Haifa and the dividing line would be somewhere between them. I gathered that he would not be averse from a safeguard being inserted in any agreement that was made between France and Great Britain for the protection of the interests of the Haifa-Deraa line in this respect. We both agreed that the suggestion that had been made that there might be two railways down the Yarmuk Valley, one under French control and one under British was not very practicable.

(4) He had had some conversation this morning with some of the French residents of Jerusalem. He thought that they were all quite ready to accept

British Administration, but were nervous as to the attitude that might be adopted if and when the country came fully under Zionist influence. They were afraid of Zionist intolerance. There seemed to be some nervousness also whether the present Administration might not adopt an attitude unfavourable to the French Schools, and particularly whether they might not be subjected to heavy taxation. I assured Monsieur de Caix that such a suggestion had never even been considered and that all schools would certainly receive equal treatment at our hands, in such matters as taxation. It was, however, more likely that voluntary schools would receive subsidies from the Government than be subjected to special taxation, though in view of the present state of our finances a policy of subsidy had not yet been sanctioned.

A number of points of detail were discussed during the course of the interview which was of a most friendly character. Monsieur de Caix informed me that General Gouraud was proceeding within a few days to France for some weeks, during which period he would act on General Gouraud's behalf.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT SAMUEL

No. 327

Sir A. Geddes (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received October 15, 11.50 a.m.)

No. 700 Telegraphic [E 12714/4164/44]

WASHINGTON, October 14, 1920, 11 p.m.

Zionist opinion in this country is at present much concerned at rumour that draft mandate for Palestine makes no mention of a preferential right to Jewish agency in respect of economic concessions or of Jewish historic claims to reconstitution of Palestine as a national home.

It is further urged that existing French territorial (? claims) would deprive national home, if created, of water resources of Upper Jordan and Yarmuck Valley and would exclude possibility of Jewish colonisation of sparsely populated region of trans-Jordan plains.

You are aware how influential Zionist Jews, such as Chief Justice Bran(?dei)s, Judge Mack and Rabbi Wise, have been in determining action by existing democratic administration. I think that it would be polite [? politic] to meet Zionist ambitions as far as possible and to do everything that can be done in London to persuade their representatives there that that is His Majesty's Government's policy.

If anything were to make American Jews join with Irish, while Irish affairs are still acute, situation here might readily become extremely difficult.¹

¹ In his answering despatch, No. 1188 of Oct. 20 (not printed), Lord Curzon said that the point of view of the Zionist Organization regarding the draft mandate had been 'exhaustively considered and their wishes met in so far as is considered fair and reasonable'. He also outlined for Sir A. Geddes's information the recent course of the Anglo-French negotiations.

*Earl Curzon to Mr. Vansittart (Paris)**No. 163 [E 12403/4164/44]**Urgent*FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 16, 1920*

Sir,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch No. 91 of October 7th¹ reporting the progress of your negotiations with the French Foreign Office regarding the northern frontier of Palestine and certain water and railway questions connected therewith.

The first alternative frontier which you were instructed to endeavour to secure² was put forward partly because it does in fact represent in the eyes of our local experts the only natural frontier of Palestine from an economic, geographical and strategic point of view, but chiefly because it was thought desirable, as a move in the negotiations not immediately to accept the frontier proposed by the French in their draft mandate for Syria. Not much hope was entertained here as to the French Government agreeing to negotiate on this line, and your action in falling back on the second alternative is therefore approved.

With regard to the conditions (a) (b) (c) (d) and (e) attached by His Majesty's Government to their acceptance of the French line, (b) and (d) are now satisfactorily settled.

With regard to (a) the attitude of the French Government appears to His Majesty's Government unreasonable. It is unnecessary here to recapitulate the arguments which are well-known to you regarding the immense importance to the future development of Palestine of an increased and controlled water supply in connection with water power and irrigation schemes. In fact the foundation of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine, which is one of the obligations undertaken by His Majesty's Government in accepting the mandate, and in favour of which the French Government have declared themselves both before the end of the war, and implicitly in the terms of the Turkish Treaty, largely depends for its success on the future utilisation of the waters of the Litani and Yarmuk. These water schemes are only likely to be carried out by Jewish capital, and in neither case can they be other than beneficial to the population and industries of the French mandatory area. In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government feel entitled to appeal once again to their French Allies to consent to the insertion of some clause in the draft Anglo-French Convention which would enable a future agreement to be reached regarding the utilisation of the waters of the Litani and Yarmuk.

It is at the same time realised both that the terms of the draft enclosed in your letter to Major Young of June 29th³ may involve too detailed an obligation on the French, and that as you urge forcibly in your despatch, His Majesty's Government cannot expect to move the French from their present attitude without meeting them in some way in another direction.

¹ Not printed.² See No. 322.³ No. 272, enclosure 2.

In thus appealing to the French Government you should therefore say that His Majesty's Government are disposed favourably to consider the further modification of the French frontier in the neighbourhood of Metullah and Banias referred to in the postscript to your despatch under reply, and also the question of free transit through Banias east and west and north (a new proposal on our part) if, in the first instance, the French Foreign Office would submit for the consideration of His Majesty's Government a further draft clause which they would regard as acceptable, permitting some future agreement regarding the diversion of a part of the Litani waters for Palestine's use, and the utilisation by Palestine of the Yarmuk waters, and conserving the latter waters for Palestine.

M. Kammerer's proposed clause regarding the Yarmuk is not enclosed in your despatch, but it is assumed that it is similar to the clause already in the draft Anglo-French Convention regarding the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates. A similar wording would not be quite satisfactory in the case of the Yarmuk and the Litani, because, as you are aware, the water schemes in both cases contemplate some construction in the French territory, and the mere promise that the French would not themselves draw off the waters without an agreement with His Majesty's Government would not suffice. On the other hand His Majesty's Government would not insist on any such detailed clause as that previously submitted in the case of the Litani.

His Majesty's Government feel justified in thus linking up the latest French proposal for modification of the frontier in the neighbourhood of Banias and Metullah with that of the waters of the Litani and Yarmuk, because, as will be clear from a perusal of this area as marked on the Damascus-Jaffa sheet of the 1:250,000 Geographical Section, General Staff map, the present French proposal would effectively cut off both Banias and Metullah from any existing road communication with each other or with the rest of Palestine, and it could therefore hardly be regarded as anything but a grudging acceptance of the Prime Minister's appeal for a Palestine with frontiers so drawn as to include the country between Dan (Banias) and Beersheba—an appeal which the French representatives in principle accepted at the Supreme Council's meetings at San Remo.⁴

With regard to conditions (c) and (e), the position is that no part of the western desert area east of the Jordan and south of Damascus has been surveyed for a railway, at any rate for a long period, but there is reason to believe that a railway can be built out of the Jordan valley up the Wadi es Zerka; whether or how it could be subsequently carried across the desert is not known.

In these uncertain conditions and seeing that (1) the boundaries were originally drawn by Sir M. Sykes and Monsieur Picot very roughly on a small-scale map at a time when a British mandate for Palestine was not contemplated, and (2) that the Semakh-Deraa railway is of vital importance to Palestine⁵ and may well be essential to the communications between the two British mandatory areas, His Majesty's Government felt entitled to ask

⁴ See Vol. VIII, No. 16, minute 1.

⁵ Cf. No. 324.

the French Government, as their Allies, to consent, not only to maintain the clause in the Sykes-Picot agreement regarding the polygon, but also to ask that the boundary might be drawn in the Yarmuk valley so as to enable His Majesty's Government to build a railway there on their own territory and, failing the possibility of such construction, to have common running rights with the French over the existing railway.

It now appears, according to the latest information of His Majesty's Government, that the construction of two railways in the Yarmuk valley will almost certainly prove impossible, and as the French Government seem determined not to accept all the three courses proposed by His Majesty's Government regarding the railway, His Majesty's Government for their part, are now prepared to drop altogether the clause regarding the retention of their rights in the polygon, if the French Foreign Office will, for their part, accept a modified form of their latest draft of clause 6. A copy of this modification is enclosed herein⁶ and its purport is to enable His Majesty's Government to have joint running rights over the Semakh-Deraa railway as soon as possible after the entry into force of the mandate and not only when the possibility of constructing a second railway in the valley has been proved impracticable or too expensive. These rights will continue until the second railway is built or indefinitely, failing its construction. The clause also takes into account suggestions (a) and (b) made by General Mance and reported in your despatch No. 93 of October 12th.⁷ Unless the clause in this modified form is accepted His Majesty's Government will expose themselves to the risk of being informed, when they desire to secure the common running rights, that they have insufficiently examined the technical possibilities of a second railway, or that their views of what is too costly do not coincide with those of the French Government.

You should resume your negotiations on these lines, and report to me again in due course.

I would add that, if it would facilitate your negotiations now to take up also clause IX of the draft convention regarding schools, you may inform the French Government that His Majesty's Government accept it subject to the amendment shown in the enclosure in my despatch No. 157 of September 30th.⁸ The clauses of the mandate quoted in that amendment are those relating to schools and missionaries in the mandates, and the precise numbering of the clauses depends upon the final form of the mandates themselves, and cannot therefore at present be fixed.

I am, &c.,
(for the Secretary of State)⁹

⁶ Not attached to filed copy.

⁷ Not printed.

⁸ Cf. penultimate para. of No. 322. In his despatch No. 96 of Oct. 21 (not printed) Mr. Vansittart reported that this amendment had been accepted.

⁹ Signature missing on filed copy.

Text of Article 6 of the 'Projet de Convention' as amended by Mr. Hutchinson¹⁰ and Mr. Forbes Adam,¹¹ October 14, 1920

1. Le Gouvernement français s'engage à faciliter par un arrangement libéral l'exploitation en commun du tronçon du chemin de fer existant entre le lac de Tibériade et Deraa. Cet arrangement devra être conclu entre les administrations des chemins de fer des zones sous mandats français et britannique aussitôt que possible après l'entrée en vigueur des mandats pour la Palestine et la Syrie. L'accord devra permettre, notamment à l'administration de la zone anglaise, de faire circuler des trains britanniques avec leur propre traction et leur personnel sur la section précitée du chemin de fer existant dans les deux sens à toutes fins autres que le trafic local des territoires sous mandat français. L'accord fixera en même temps les conditions financières, administratives et techniques de la circulation des trains britanniques. Au cas où les deux administrations n'arriveraient pas à se mettre d'accord dans un délai de trois mois après la mise en vigueur des deux mandats précités, un arbitre serait nommé par le Conseil de la Ligue des Nations pour régler les points restés en désaccord et l'on mettrait en application immédiate, dans la mesure du possible, les parties de cet accord sur lesquelles l'entente serait faite.

Ledit accord, conclu pour une durée indéterminée, serait sujet à des revisions périodiques, selon les besoins.

2. Le Gouvernement britannique pourra faire passer une canalisation le long de la voie existante, et aura à perpétuité et à tous moments le droit de faire passer ses troupes par le chemin de fer.

3. Le Gouvernement français agréé la nomination d'une commission spéciale, laquelle, après avoir étudié le terrain, pourra réajuster la ligne frontière ci-dessus mentionnée dans la vallée du Yarmouk jusqu'à Deraa, de manière à rendre possible la construction d'un chemin de fer et d'une canalisation britannique reliant la Palestine avec le chemin de fer du Hedjaz et la vallée de l'Euphrate et passant entièrement dans les limites des zones sous mandats britanniques. Il est entendu toutefois que le chemin de fer actuel du Yarmouk reste intégralement sur le territoire du mandat français.

4. La commission prévue ci-dessus sera composée d'un représentant du Gouvernement français et d'un représentant du Gouvernement britannique, auxquels pourront être adjoints des représentants des Gouvernements légaux et des experts à titre de conseillers techniques, dans la mesure où les Gouvernements français et britannique le jugeront nécessaire.

5. Au cas où les tracés de ces deux chemins de fer viendraient à se croiser ou se superposer à certains endroits, le Gouvernement français reconnaîtrait la pleine et entière exterritorialité des tronçons se trouvant ainsi sur les

¹⁰ Presumably Mr. H. J. Hutchinson, private secretary to one of the Joint Permanent Secretaries of the Board of Trade.

¹¹ A member of the British Peace Delegation in Paris.

territoires du mandat français et donnerait au Gouvernement britannique ou à ses agents techniques large et facile accès pour toutes les questions de chemin de fer.

6. Au cas où le Gouvernement britannique décide de construire le chemin de fer dans la vallée du Yarmouk précité au troisième alinéa de cet article et au deuxième alinéa de l'article 1^{er}, l'accord visé au premier alinéa du présent article prendra fin trois mois après que la construction sera complètement achevée. Au même moment les droits accordés par le deuxième alinéa de cet article prendront fin.

7. Le Gouvernement français s'engage à faire reconnaître les droits ci-dessus stipulés au profit du Gouvernement britannique par les Gouvernements locaux sous mandat français.¹²

¹² In his despatch No. 96 of Oct. 21 (not printed) Mr. Vansittart reported that he had induced the French to accept the above redraft of this Article with a few unimportant modifications: 'The railway clauses may therefore be considered settled to our satisfaction.'

No. 329

Note from the Italian Ambassador to Earl Curzon

No. 2202 [E 13385/20/44]

Translation

ITALIAN EMBASSY, LONDON, October 23, 1920

My Lord,

Your Lordship's note of September 17th last (No. 11058/20/44), with reference to the recent Anglo-French Petroleum Agreement,¹ was transmitted by me to my Government and carefully considered by the latter.

In reply, I have the honour to draw Your Lordship's attention to the following points, viz:—

(1) The existence of American control over 80% of the world's oil production—a control which, moreover, is of a different nature than that which inspires the Anglo-French Agreement—increases the danger, referred to in the recent Anglo-French Agreement, to consuming nations who possess no oil supplies within their own territory and are not America, Great Britain and France. For these nations, who cannot directly control oil production, the supply of this valuable fuel therefore becomes subject to political contingencies arising from special situations or agreements, in distinct contrast to the fundamental principle of absolute liberty of trade.

(2) The Anglo-French Agreement, indeed, imposes or tends to impose conditions for the distribution of petroleum, and, in any event, hinders the free disposal² of that commodity. The Agreement represents a close association of Anglo-French interests for mutual defence and mutual development, and obviously also for the resistance [*sic*] of any other interests. Thus the policy of this Agreement is to obtain control of production, of distribution, and necessarily of prices as well.

(3) The Anglo-French Agreement therefore impedes free circulation of raw

¹ No. 318.

² The original text here read: 'disponibilità'.

materials, although this has been recognised as a fundamental condition for industrial reconstruction by all the Interallied councils and conferences, as well as by the Supreme Economic Council.

Lastly, it contradicts the fundamental principles set forth by the Economic Manifesto drawn up and published in London in March last,³ a short time before the San Remo Conference.

Without quoting from Pars. 2 and 3, I would wish to quote what is stated in Par. 10 of the said Manifesto, viz.:—

‘The Powers represented at the Conference recognize the necessity of continued collaboration in this matter, and they will continue to consult together regarding the provision and distribution of the necessary raw materials and food stuffs with a view to the early resumption of normal conditions.’

This point of view, which was evidently held to be fundamental at that time by the Heads of the Allied Governments, is repeated in (6) of Par. 12.

(4) The Anglo-French Agreement is further contrary to the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations, as it is inspired by a discriminating and exclusive policy.

Indeed this Agreement prescribes in Article 2 (in addition to the provisions with regard to oil in Mesopotamia) the obligation of co-operation and reciprocity between the two contracting nations in Roumania, Asia Minor, and Galicia as well, where Anglo-French syndicates have already worked or are working, as also in territories belonging to the former Russian Empire, in regard to which plans and⁴ operation are being prepared.

(5) The monopolistic character of the Agreement is shown, on the other hand, by the similarity of treatment reserved to themselves by the two contracting parties within the above-named territories and that to be established in the British and French colonies. This is shown by Article 3, which renders possible the extension of this Agreement to all other countries.

(6) As regards Mesopotamia and Syria, without wishing to deal specifically with the general question of the extension or nature of the mandate, or with that of the legality of the whole system, it must be said that the restrictions mentioned in the said Article contradict Article 23 (e) of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which sets forth the obligation of taking all necessary steps to secure equitable treatment for the commerce of all Members of the League, and therefore, *a fortiori*, of taking no measures contrary to the said principle.

I consider it expedient to draw Your Lordship's attention to the fact that the above remarks, apart from general principles of equity and necessity, solidarity and co-operation, are also dictated by anxiety for the special position in which Italy finds herself and by the direct consequences to herself which the application of the Agreement in question may involve.

Italy has no fuel of her own. For her, petroleum represents the possibility of supplying the minimum requirements in fuel of her industries and trans-

³ Cmd. 646 of 1920.

⁴ The original text here read: ‘di’.

ports, should coal become scarce or fail. It also represents a possibility of security whenever the price of coal would render the working of her industries impossible from an economic point of view, above all, if a system of discrimination should exist. The grave possibilities of such a situation are proved by the present state of affairs in Italy.

On the other hand, the countries principally contemplated by the Anglo-French Agreement, i.e., the markets of the Near East, are and were the natural markets for Italy's requirements. They will continue so to be to an even greater degree now that the war has disorganised the production and transport of European coal, which has become scarce and dear not only by reason of the natural state of affairs thus created, but also owing to an artificial system of control.

That being the state of affairs, Great Britain and France, who have at their disposal the greater bulk of European coal, appear by the San Remo Convention to wish to control oil production as well, which has hitherto been free.

It is for all the foregoing reasons that the Italian Government has desired to set forth all the general principles which disagree with the clauses of the San Remo Convention, whilst considering it expedient to state that the said Agreement likewise represents a serious hindrance not only to the economic reconstruction of Italy, but to her industrial development as well.

In view of that which I have had the honour of stating to Your Lordship above, I wish to express my confidence that the Government of His Britannia [*sic*] Majesty will deem it expedient to re-consider the question and arrive at a settlement which will protect the legitimate and essential interests of my country.⁵

I beg to remain, &c.,
IMPERIALI

⁵ In answer to a further letter of Nov. 22 to Lord Curzon (not printed), in which the Marquis Imperiali asked for a reply to the foregoing note, Sir J. Tilley in a letter of Dec. 3 (not printed) said that the question raised was receiving 'careful consideration'.

No. 330

Foreign Office Memorandum on Arabian Policy

[E 13523/9/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE [October 23, 1920]¹

It is submitted that the time has now arrived for an authoritative decision on the whole question of the political and financial obligations to be incurred in the future by His Majesty's Government in Arabia. The question was discussed by an inter-departmental meeting at the Foreign Office on the 17th April (Appendix (C)),² but matters had not then advanced sufficiently for concrete recommendations to be made.

¹ This memorandum, received in the Foreign Office registry on Nov. 8, is undated but a minute by Major Young, dated Oct. 23, reads: 'I have prepared the attached memorandum. . . .'

² Not printed.

The position is now that negotiations are shortly to be opened in Paris between His Majesty's Government and the French Government in the first place, and eventually between the principal Allied Powers, on the subject of Arabia.

By Arabia is meant the area bounded on the north-west by the peninsula of Sinai and the British mandatory areas of Palestine and Trans-Jordan; on the north-east by the British mandatory area of Mesopotamia; on the east by the Persian Gulf; on the south-east by the Indian Ocean, and on the west by the Red Sea. A more detailed description of what is defined as the peninsula of Arabia will be found in Appendix (A).³

2. The population of Arabia consists almost entirely of Arab tribal elements, grouped in some cases into large confederations, who acknowledge the sovereignty of one individual. In the case of the Hedjaz, this individual is the Sherif of Mecca, who has been recognised by the Allied Powers as King of the Hedjaz. The boundaries of the Hedjaz have never been defined, but the Hedjaz as a State was an original member of the League of Nations, and so long as it remains so it stands on an entirely different footing from the remainder of the peninsula.

3. From the correspondence in Appendix (B)⁴ it will be seen that the India Office and the Foreign Office are in agreement that Arabia, exclusive of the Hedjaz and Aden, should be regarded as falling into ten main sub-divisions, and that their present policy is to deal with each of these sub-divisions through one individual, with the two exceptions of the Trucial Coast of Oman and the tribe of the Anazeh, who acknowledge no single ruler.

The ten divisions are as follows:—

Nejd	Ibn Saud.
Hail	Ibn Rashid.
Koweit	Sheikh Salim.
Bahrein	Sheikh of Bahrein.
Muscat	Sultan of Muscat.
Trucial Coast	Petty Chiefs.
Hadramaut	Sultan of Shehr and Mokalla.
Yemen	Imam Yahya.
Asir	Idrisi Said.
Anazeh	No single ruler.

(It should be remarked that the Sheikh of Mohammerah, whose inclusion was recommended by the Civil Commissioner, Bagdad, in his telegram No. 15123 of the 15th December, 1919,⁴ is a Persian subject, and that his dominions lie in Persian territory.)

4. Appendix (A)³ is the draft of a treaty dealing with the settlement of the Arabian Peninsula. This draft was prepared by the British Delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris in consultation with the Foreign Office, who had previously consulted a number of experts on Arab affairs, and had com-

³ This Appendix, not here reprinted, was the same as enclosure 1 in No. 272.

⁴ Not printed.

municated copies of an earlier draft⁵ to the India Office, the Director of Military Intelligence and the Admiralty.

5. It will be noticed that in article 3 His Majesty's Government are endeavouring to secure the recognition by the other Allied Powers of the special political interests of Great Britain in the Arabian Peninsula in view of its proximity to parts of the British Empire and to maritime communications with India.

But this is not the only reason why His Majesty's Government desire recognition of their special position in Arabia. They have been for many years in intimate relations with the Sheikhs of Koweit and Bahrein and the Sultan of Muscat, the Trucial Chiefs, Ibn Saud and the Sultan of Shehr and Mokalla—to such an extent, indeed, that it has been generally recognised by other Powers that their interference in the territories of these rulers would be regarded as an unfriendly act.

Out of the remaining four rulers in the list in paragraph 3, the territories of two, namely, the Imam and the Idrisi, are coterminous with the Aden protectorate, while the territories of the other two, namely, Ibn Rashid and the Anazeh, are coterminous with the British mandatory areas of Mesopotamia and Trans-Jordan. The only other Power which can legitimately claim an interest in any of the ten areas defined in paragraph 3 is France, since portions of the Anazeh lie within the French mandatory area. It is for this reason that it has been decided to make no attempt to deal with the Anazeh as one confederation under one ruler, but to regard the eastern section of the tribe as dependent upon Mesopotamia.

Another argument for the recognition of British interests in Arabia is the fact that His Majesty's Government are already in treaty relations with all the ten areas except the Anazeh, Ibn Rashid and the Imam.

It is, perhaps, as well, in order to remove any misapprehensions as to the object of the Arabian Treaty, which is now being negotiated, to point out that we are endeavouring to obtain no new position in Arabia—at any rate, in so far as eight out of the ten areas are concerned. His Majesty's Government are already regarded by all the rulers, with the possible exceptions of the Imam and Ibn Rashid, as the only foreign Power which has any real interest in the peninsula. Other Powers are well aware of this, and it is only the separation of Arabia from the Ottoman Empire which renders it desirable to obtain official concurrence from the other Allies to a state of affairs which in effect already exists. The object of the present discussion is merely to arrive at a co-ordinated policy, which will in future be followed by His Majesty's Government, and to decide whether those areas and rulers with whom His Majesty's Government were not intimately connected before the war should now be placed on the same footing as those with whom they have had dealings for many years past, or whether it is necessary to revise the policy of financial support and to withdraw it from those rulers who have been receiving it for so long.

The urgent necessity of having some instrument on paper defining the

⁵ Not printed.

position of His Majesty's Government in Arabia may be seen from enquiries directed by the German and American Governments as to the position of Bahrein.

6. Although the Hedjaz and Aden are excluded from the peninsula as defined in the draft treaty, neither area can be overlooked in any discussion of the policy of His Majesty's Government in Arabia.

The independent Kingdom of the Hedjaz contains the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina, which are venerated by Moslems throughout the world, and which are of international importance owing to the yearly pilgrimage. As the Allied Power with the greatest Mahommedan interests, and as the originator of the movement which resulted in the independence of the Hedjaz and the kingship of King Hussein, His Majesty's Government could not readily admit that any other Power is so intimately connected with the future of that country as herself. In view of its status as an independent member of the League of Nations, it is impossible to include it in the area in which His Majesty's Government are demanding a special position, but the fact that it will be entirely surrounded by areas for which His Majesty's Government are responsible, or in which His Majesty's Government are, as a matter of fact, in a predominant position already, must inevitably lead to the Hedjaz Government regarding His Majesty's Government as more important to themselves than any other Power. The areas bordering on the Hedjaz are the British mandatory areas of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, and the territories of Ibn Rashid, Ibn Saud and the Idrisi, two of whom have agreed to accept the arbitration of His Majesty's Government on frontier questions. King Hussein himself has also agreed to accept this arbitration. The final definition of the frontiers of the Hedjaz could most suitably be embodied in a treaty between King Hussein, on the one side, and His Majesty's Government, as representing his immediate neighbours, on the other. Other Powers might certainly object to this, but, even if they hesitate to confirm in writing the existing British position in Arabia, nothing can alter the fact that it is to His Majesty's Government alone that all concerned look for a just and satisfactory settlement, and, in whatever manner the boundaries may be fixed, British arbitration alone will be appealed to in frontier disputes. Apart from the question of boundaries, which may have to be fixed by a commission appointed by the League of Nations, there appears to be no insuperable objection to His Majesty's Government concluding a treaty with the independent Kingdom of the Hedjaz, as eventually defined, which may or may not include some provision for financial support, provided that the treaty, when concluded, is laid before the League of Nations. It would, however, be undesirable that the financial support should take the form of an unconditional subsidy. King Hussein was heavily subsidised during the war, when he led the Arab revolt which was supported exclusively by His Majesty's Government. His subsidy has been gradually reduced, and for the last seven months he has received no payments at all. His attitude towards His Majesty's Government has entirely changed, and he accuses them openly of having led him during the war to expect a position which he now sees he is unlikely to obtain.

On the 19th July the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs circulated a memorandum (Appendix (D))⁶ to the Cabinet appealing for an early decision on the question of financial support for King Hussein, but the matter remains under consideration. Since that date matters have gone from bad to worse, and the withdrawal of financial support, coupled with the action of the French in Syria, has confirmed King Hussein in the suspicions with which he regards the Allied Powers, and especially His Majesty's Government. Whatever may be decided about our relations with the other rulers of Arabia, it is essential, if we are to preserve our prestige in the Moslem world, that steps should be taken without delay to restore confidence in the mind of the guardian of the Holy Places of Islam.

7. The Aden Protectorate was excluded from the Aden peninsula as defined in the draft treaty more because its inclusion would have given rise to the impression that it was a matter for discussion than because the position of His Majesty's Government in the protectorate, as opposed to the fortress itself, differs materially from the position for which they now demand recognition from the Allied Powers. Between the fortress and what used to be the Turkish Empire are a number of small tribes, with all of whom His Majesty's Government are in treaty relations and who receive purely nominal stipends. The total expenditure under this head amounts to 70,000 rupees a year, and no alteration in the existing system could well be contemplated unless at some time His Majesty's Government were to consider the readjustment of the protectorate frontier. This question does not come within the scope of the present discussion.

8. It is clear that His Majesty's Government cannot demand a special position in the Arabian peninsula, exclusive of the Hedjaz and Aden, without undertaking corresponding obligations.

Article 4 of the draft treaty lays down that Great Britain will undertake to use her influence to secure for the commerce and navigation of all high contracting parties, while engaging in lawful enterprise, treatment as favourable as that she may be able to secure for her own.

Article 5 refers to the predominant interests of Great Britain in the maintenance of the peace and prosperity of the Arabian peninsula, and provides that the high contracting parties should agree to respect any treaties on the general lines of those already concluded between His Majesty's Government and the rulers of the said peninsula, other than the King of the Hedjaz.

Article 6 describes the obligations to be incurred by His Majesty's Government in addition to those defined in *article 4* as being:—

- (i) Arbitration in all disputes.
- (ii) Protection from attacks by sea.
- (iii) Guarantee of independence without interference in internal affairs.

In return for these benefits the chiefs are to engage to keep open the roads leading to the Holy Places, not to enter into treaties with other foreign

⁶ Not printed.

Powers, and not to alienate territory or grant concessions without the consent of His Majesty's Government.

9. What do these obligations involve?

They clearly postulate a state of affairs under which the respective rulers recognise the necessity of meeting the wishes of His Majesty's Government. This cannot be ensured by fear of aggressive action being taken against them. Even those whose territory borders on the sea are practically immune from attack other than the bombardment of undefended towns, and His Majesty's Government have no intention of conducting expensive expeditions into the interior of Arabia. It cannot be ensured by the threat of blockade, since this is a very difficult weapon to direct against one ruler to the exclusion of others. It has been found in practice during the war that there is invariably some loophole by which supplies reach the blockaded ruler, even through the territories of rulers who are professedly friendly to His Majesty's Government. If the Imam were blockaded he would obtain supplies through the Asir and Hadramaut. If Ibn Saud were blockaded he would receive them through Bahrein and Koweit, and so on.

As no threat would in itself be sufficient to ensure a satisfactory attitude, some other means must be found of establishing the influence we desire the other Powers to recognise.

In the case of all the rulers with whom we were in intimate relations before the war, with the exception of the Sheikh of Bahrein, the policy of the Government of India has been to ensure a satisfactory attitude by offering financial support. During the war the same principle was extended to the rulers whose co-operation against the Turks was desirable in the interests of the Allies. It is the method that was invariably employed by the Turks themselves, and it is difficult to see how any other method can be effective.

10. In the case of those rulers whose territories are open to attack by sea it may perhaps be argued that no additional benefit beyond protection from such attack should be looked for from His Majesty's Government, and that the question of financial assistance does not therefore arise. The deduction would be that Ibn Rashid is the only ruler to whom it might be necessary to provide financial support to ensure his carrying out his side of the bargain, since he is the only ruler whose territory does not at any point touch the sea. There are, however, two reasons why this arbitrary distinction would be difficult to carry out in practice.

The first is that, as will be seen from paragraph 11, three of the nine rulers whose territory touches the sea are already in receipt of financial support from His Majesty's Government—namely, the Sultan of Muscat, the Sultan of Shehr and Mokalla and the Sheikh of Koweit. Any proposal to stop subsidies to rulers whose territories touch the sea would involve the cessation of pecuniary assistance to these three rulers and, in the case of the Sultan of Shehr and Mokalla, the abrogation of his treaty rights in so far as they provide for a subsidy.

The second objection to the line of argument, which would result in the entire cessation of subsidies to rulers whose territories touch the sea, is the

fact that a subsidy, however small, is regarded as a mark of special favour, and any discrimination between one ruler and another, however logically it might be supported, would inevitably cause jealousy and friction. The same argument applies with even greater force to any other attempt to discriminate between one group of rulers and another, unless His Majesty's Government adopt the definite policy of supporting one ruler and making all the others subordinate to him. This would involve the reconsideration of the division of the peninsula into its ten natural areas, and would in any case be exceedingly difficult to carry out in view of the traditional reluctance of any Arab ruler to acknowledge the suzerainty of another. It would also involve an alteration of the terms of the draft treaty by which His Majesty's Government are to 'guarantee the independence of the rulers of Arabia'.

It is submitted that the only practical method of securing the influence which His Majesty's Government hope to deny to other Powers is by extending the principle of financial support to all the independent rulers of Arabia.

11. Before discussing how this can best be done, it may be useful to summarise the present position:—

(1) *Muscat*.—*The Sultan of Muscat* was granted in 1861 an allowance of 86,400 rupees per annum from Indian revenues, and in 1911 he was granted a further subsidy of 100,000 rupees per annum in connection with the agreement for the regulation of the arms traffic.

(2) *Hadramaut*.—*The Sultan of Shehr and Mokalla* is at present in receipt of a stipend of 60 rupees *per mensem* in accordance with the terms of the treaty of 1882. In 1917 he was given a loan of 400,000 rupees, which he is gradually repaying, instalments of 15,000 having been credited in November 1919 and in March 1920.

(3) *Trucial Coast*.—No subsidies are at present being paid.

(4) *Bahrein*.—No subsidy.

(5) *Yemen*.—*The Imam Yahya* is at present hostile to His Majesty's Government. In the spring of this year he invaded the Aden protectorate and established his officials among the more northerly tribes. Attempts were made to open negotiations with him, but had to be abandoned, partly owing to the capture by local tribes of the mission sent to Sanaa, and partly owing to the fact that the Imam declined to recognise His Majesty's Government as having any special right to regulate the affairs of the Yemen. One result of the negotiation of the present treaty with the principal Allied Powers will be to determine the position of His Majesty's Government *vis-à-vis* the Imam, and it is hoped that a treaty may be negotiated with him in the near future. It has been represented by His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo that it would probably be cheaper in the end to ensure his non-interference in the Aden protectorate by paying him some small sum as a token of favour than by attempting to keep him out of the protectorate by force.

(6) *Asir*.—*The Idrisi Said* has been loyal to His Majesty's Government throughout the war, and was in receipt of a subsidy up to June 1919. He is not on good terms with either of his two neighbours, King Hussein or the Imam. He has, however, consistently professed himself ready to accept the

arbitration of His Majesty's Government in outstanding questions. This arbitration would be difficult, if not impossible, to carry out if any discrimination were made between him and the Imam on the question of financial assistance. He has represented many times that, while he has remained loyal to us, he obtains no benefit from his loyalty, and the fact that King Hussein and Ibn Saud have both received subsidies long after his own subsidy was stopped has probably been at the back of his mind in making these representations.

(7) *Anazeh*—*Fahad Beg*, the ruler of the section of the Anazeh whose country borders on Mesopotamia, receives a subsidy of 17,000 rupees a month from Mesopotamian revenues. This is understood to be in connection with his assistance to us in blockade work, but no proposal has yet been made for the reduction or cessation of the allowance.

(8) *Koweit*.—*The Sheikh of Koweit* has a stretch of foreshore leased by His Majesty's Government, and is exempted from payment of taxes on his date gardens in Basra to the extent of 60,000 rupees a year. The Civil Commissioner at Bagdad has recommended that the lease should be terminated, and that a similar amount should be paid to him quarterly in arrears, admittedly as a subsidy, and subject to his good behaviour.

(9) *Hail*.—*Ibn Rashid* is at present in receipt of no subsidy, but the Civil Commissioner, Bagdad, has recommended a subsidy of 37,500 rupees a month.

(10) *Nejd*.—*Ibn Saud* is at present in receipt of a subsidy of 5,000*l.* a month. He also received recently an additional present of 5,000*l.* as a mark of appreciation from His Majesty's Government for having restrained his followers from making the pilgrimage. The High Commissioner at Bagdad now suggests that his subsidy should be increased to 100,000*l.* a year, paid quarterly. An interesting report on the political situation in Nejd has been recently received in the India Office,⁷ from which it appears that Ibn Saud's position is by no means so strong as has sometimes been imagined, and that there would be decided opposition on the part of the other rulers to any policy of aggrandising him at the expense of his neighbours.

12. If it is accepted that there is no objection to His Majesty's Government concluding a treaty with the independent King of the Hedjaz, and that the only way for them to establish their influence with the remaining rulers of Arabia is to afford them a minimum of financial support, the deduction appears to be that His Majesty's Government should take the following line:—

(1) As soon as the Turkish treaty is ratified, and independently of the draft treaty dealing with Arabia (Appendix (A)), they should conclude a treaty with the King of the Hedjaz, in which it would be provided:—

(a) That, in return for certain definite undertakings to be made by King Hussein, His Majesty's Government would arrange for and guarantee a loan secured on the customs revenues and mineral resources of the country.

⁷ A copy of this report of Aug. 12 (not printed) was received in the Foreign Office on Oct. 19.

- (b) That, so far as his foreign relations with other Arab rulers were concerned, he would undertake to accept the arbitration of His Majesty's Government in every case.

The negotiations could most conveniently be conducted through the Emir Feisal.

(2) As soon as the draft treaty (Appendix (A)) is signed the other independent rulers of Arabia should be informed that this has been done, and invited to enter into, modify or ratify the existing treaty relations between them and His Majesty's Government.

13. The actual form which the financial assistance to the other Arab rulers should take cannot be discussed until the broad principle that they should be so assisted is accepted. It is, however, suggested that, in the case of rulers whose territories contain resources which would secure a loan, the support should take the form of a loan, possibly guaranteed by His Majesty's Treasury, and, in the case of such rulers as Ibn Rashid, whose territory is entirely unproductive, it should take the form of a small personal allowance paid in arrears and given in return for certain definite undertakings, such as to keep open the pilgrimage routes, to preserve the integrity of the boundaries decided on by British arbitration, to refrain from hostile action against his neighbours and to exclude foreign influence.

Unless we are prepared to go as far as this, it is useless for us to demand recognition of our position in Arabia; and until the general principle is accepted it is impossible to formulate a detailed policy to meet individual cases.

H. W. Y.

No. 331

Letter from Dr. Weizmann to Earl Curzon (Received November 1)

[E 13514/4164/44]

LONDON, October 30, 1920

My Lord,

I want to thank you for your kind private letter of the 18th instant¹ in answer to the official letter of the 11th instant which I wrote you regarding our anxiety about the northern frontier of Palestine.¹ I want you to know how deeply I appreciate the personal interest you are taking in our affairs, and how reassuring the knowledge of this is to me.

I should like very much to have the pleasure of an interview with your Lordship some time next week² in order to go over the situation both with reference to the frontier and the mandate, but I think it may be also helpful if I write you briefly about these matters.

Mr. Vansittart has told me of the latest developments at Paris regarding

¹ Not printed. Dr. Weizmann had also written on Sept. 24 to Mr. Balfour, who had forwarded his letter to Lord Hardinge on Sept. 29 and asked for an indication of what was going on. These letters and Lord Hardinge's reply of Oct. 8 to Mr. Balfour are not printed.

² No interview took place, but Lord Curzon's reply is printed as No. 333 below.

the frontier, and I do not see how the settlement now proposed by France can possibly be accepted if any regard is to be had to the future of Palestine. The French have, so far as we can discover, no substantial interests to be served by depriving Palestine of those resources in the north and east which are essential to her economic life, and it would be a great pity from every point of view, even from that of France, if a settlement were now to be precipitated which would permanently imperil the future of the Holy Land. The atmosphere in Paris at present, I know, is surcharged with anti-British feeling which is reacting to the detriment of the National Home; but things are so much in flux these days that I feel sure a satisfactory settlement will yet be obtained if only a definite agreement is not now concluded while the passions of the French are momentarily aroused. A fair settlement seemed within our reach at San Remo and it can hardly be that events since then have irreparably prejudiced the interests of the National Home. In view of the protracted delays which have already occurred and the disastrous settlement which is now proffered, it is difficult to see that any harm could possibly come from a further deferment. Certainly British public opinion is united against a wanton mutilation of the Palestinian frontiers. And I am hopeful that further help will come from America as soon as the Presidential election there is over. Mr. Vansittart thought that an appeal from the American Government might influence France where we had failed.

The settlement now suggested by the French would not only cut off Palestine from all access to the Litany, but would deprive her of the headwaters of the Jordan, the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee and the whole Yarmuk valley north of the Sykes-Picot line. I am sure that your Lordship is fully aware how disastrous to the future of the country and the project of the National Home such a settlement would be.

I thought from your Lordship's letter, however,¹ that I may not have clearly pointed out the impossibility of safeguarding adequately our rights to utilise the waters of the Upper Jordan and the Yarmuk by any provision which does not contemplate the inclusion of these waters in the territorial bounds of Palestine. Their utilisation involves not only extensive engineering works, but afforestation on a large scale. And it is impossible for any scheme of development to be physically secure or economically practical if the regions where the works are to be laid are unsettled and beyond the jurisdiction of Palestine.

The drainage and subsequent irrigation of the whole district about Lake Huleh, for example, depends upon the regulation of the waters of the Upper Jordan. This involves the construction of storage reservoirs and the afforestation of large areas in the valley of the Hasbany, the Leddan and the Banias. The maintenance of works of this character on foreign soil could hardly be contemplated. Neither capital nor labour could be secured for the undertaking.

In the case of the Yarmuk valley it is equally clear that no security would exist for the projection of works beyond the police power of Palestine. Security here could come only with the permanent settlement of a peaceful population.

And upon the utilisation of the Yarmuk and its affluents depends not only the economic future of the fertile trans-Jordanian plains but of the cis-Jordanian country as well. The irrigation of the Jordan valley by the natural force of gravitation is possible only if the water is derived from the higher levels of the Yarmuk valley. Otherwise, the water must be obtained from Lake Tiberias. But the water from Lake Tiberias would have to be pumped up to the necessary level, and that would involve an enormous expenditure of energy which might render the entire project of irrigation economically impracticable. If the Yarmuk valley is to be utilised, storage reservoirs and canals must be constructed as far east as Lake Mezerib which affords a suitable site for a large dam which will have to be erected at the eastern terminus of the works. Afforestation necessary to regulate the flow of the Yarmuk and its tributaries must also be carried out throughout the valley.

It is clear also that Lake Tiberias forms a natural storage reservoir and must be utilised for this purpose in almost any scheme of development which may be undertaken. The eastern shore must, consequently, be included in Palestine if its development from the very outset is not to be crippled. Were the eastern part of Lake Tiberias severed from Palestine the project of Mr. Rutenberg,³ which is now being discussed with the High Commissioner and for which large sums have already been subscribed, would be seriously compromised.

Your Lordship, I am sure, realises the enormous importance of the Litany to Palestine. Even if the whole of the Jordan and the Yarmuk are included in Palestine, it has insufficient water for its needs. The summer in Palestine is extremely dry, and evaporation rapid and intense. The irrigation of Upper Galilee and the power necessary for even a limited industrial life must come from the Litany. Experts agree that the Litany is of little use to the well-watered Lebanon and we have always agreed that the requirements of the territory not included in Palestine should be adequately met.

It is hardly possible that France even realises the extent to which the frontier she has proposed would cripple the economic life of Palestine. For if Palestine were cut off from the Litany, Upper Jordan and Yarmuk, to say nothing of the eastern shore of Galilee, she could not be economically independent. And a poor and impoverished Palestine could be of no advantage to any Power.

You will pardon my adding a few words about the Mandate. You know my disappointment over the changes which have been made. I realise that I must reconcile myself to some of them, but two clauses have been omitted from the final draft which I think renders infinitely more difficult our task of upbuilding Palestine in a way which perhaps I have not put clearly to you.

One of these is the clause in the preamble recognising the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute Palestine their National Home. You told me once that you thought the clause unnecessary because the San Remo decision definitely

³ A scheme for hydro-electric and irrigation undertakings in the Jordan Valley and elsewhere had been put forward by Mr. P. Rutenberg, a Russian Jewish engineer.

fixed the status of Palestine and nothing more was required.⁴ That is, of course, true from the purely legal point of view. But it is not unnecessary or unimportant from the standpoint of those of us who must seek from the Jews of the world the sacrifice and treasure required to make Palestine again a healthful and happy land, to which we hope England may look with pride and satisfaction in the years to come.

The other clause of vital importance omitted from the final draft is that safeguarding the right of the Jewish agency to undertake the development of public works and natural resources which the administration itself does not undertake. Again it may be said that such a clause is not necessary from a strictly legal point of view. It is not sufficient, however, that the necessary economic safeguards for the Jewish National Home exist in fact under a British administration, but it is necessary that my constituency, which is spread over the entire world and consists of people who are not schooled in English political life, should be convinced that these safeguards exist. So long as the Jewish agency is free of all private interest and is under strict obligation in all its public undertakings to protect the interests of the whole community there would seem to be every reason for expressing clearly the economic policy of H.M. Government as to the practical application of which I do not believe there is any dispute.

As I have said, the mandate may be adequate from a governmental point of view. But it should be adequate from another point of view. That is the economic. It should be adequate to call forth the exertion of Jewry that is necessary to upbuild Palestine and make it the home of a happy and contented people.

I am, &c.,

CH. WEIZMANN

⁴ Cf. No. 295, n. 4. In a letter of Oct. 29 (not printed) to the Prime Minister Lord Curzon had written: 'The Zionists rest their claim to have this sentence introduced upon the plea that it will enable them to raise more money in America for the development of Palestine. I may say, in passing, that I attach very little importance to this plea. The important thing is that we got the Balfour declaration—you will remember how hard a fight I made for it—into the Treaty at San Remo, and that is the Magna Charta of the Zionists. What they really want this particular clause in the Mandate for is, not in order to get money now, but in order that this sentence may be the foundation on which, at every stage, they may hold a claim for preferential treatment in Palestine, and ultimately for the complete government of the country.'

No. 332

Memorandum by Major Young

[E 13924/4164/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 6, 1920*

At the recent meeting of the Inter-Departmental Committee at which Mr. Vansittart's final Despatch was discussed,¹ the Director of Military

¹ This despatch, No. 96 of Oct. 21 to the Foreign Office (cf. No. 328, n. 12), was discussed at an Inter-departmental Committee meeting held at the Foreign Office on Oct. 29.

Intelligence on behalf of the War Office, put forward the tentative suggestion that in return for certain political concessions on the part of the French Government, His Majesty's Government should conclude a defensive military alliance with the object of removing the root cause of French intractability, which is their fear that our policy towards Germany will militate against their future security. This would be a comprehensive measure, involving considerations of high policy, on which I am not competent to express an opinion. But in the event of it being found impossible to take this line there is an alternative which was suggested at the meeting referred to, which is perhaps worthy of some consideration.

In the same way that the root cause of Anglo-French differences on European questions is the French mistrust of what they regard as our weakening on the German Treaty, the root cause of Anglo-French differences in the Middle East is their mistrust of the Arabian policy of His Majesty's Government. If this mistrust could be removed we should find the French much easier to deal with, but it cannot be removed without some concessions on our part and some degree of co-operation on the part of those Arab elements whom we are suspected of encouraging to the detriment of the French.

Some time ago, when it appeared inevitable that such outstanding questions in the Middle East as were not included in the actual terms of the Mandates could only be decided by agreement between the British and French Governments, a Memorandum was prepared on these lines,² in which it was suggested that our concession should take the form of allowing the French Mandate to extend to the strip of Trans-Jordania south of the Sykes-Picot line, on condition that the French should

- (a) recognise Feisal's suzerainty over the coastal district as well as the hinterland of Syria:
- (b) fulfil our maximum requirements for the frontiers of Palestine on both sides of the Jordan: and
- (c) that in those parts of Trans-Jordania south of the Sykes-Picot line they should give us priority of concessions.

The present position is:

- (a) That Feisal has been driven out of the hinterland as well as the coastal districts of Syria.
- (b) That His Majesty's Government are unable to obtain their minimum desiderata for Palestine; and
- (c) That our access by rail to Trans-Jordania is so hedged about with restrictions that the value to His Majesty's Government of concessions in this area is problematical.

The opinion was also expressed that in the event of the French Government declining to accept the bargain outlined above, His Majesty's Government should then demand their full pound of flesh, and at the same time make it quite clear to the local inhabitants of the areas within our sphere of

² This memorandum of Feb. 1920 by Major Young is not printed.

influence that so far as we were concerned, at any rate, our policy towards the Arabs was unchanged.

It was, however, pointed out that to take this line would be definitely to create a situation between ourselves and the French in the Middle East which would result in ever-increasing friction and possible danger to the Anglo-French Entente.

During the last few months there has been a tendency for the rift between ourselves and the French to widen, and, in view of the vital importance to His Majesty's Government of maintaining friendly relations with their nearest neighbours, it appears that every effort should be made to check this unfortunate development, so long as nothing is done that is inconsistent with the pledges of His Majesty's Government to other parties. The acceptance by the French of the suzerainty of Feisal in Syria is not an essential condition to the fulfilment of our pledges to the Arabs. Matters have in any case advanced too far now for there to be any hope of the French allowing him to return. But the frontiers of Palestine are not yet irretrievably lost, nor is Feisal irretrievably estranged from us.

It is submitted that we should now cut our losses, so far as Arab suzerainty over Syria is concerned, and make a fresh effort to convince the French that neither our Arab nor our Zionist policy is really hostile to French interests. Unless we do this there is grave risk of French insistence nullifying our Zionist as well as our Arab policy. This would mean a renewed blow to British prestige, not only in the Middle East, but in every country in which the Zionists have an important voice.

(ii) The Mandates are now practically finished, but the other outstanding questions are very little nearer solution than they were when the Treaty of Peace with Turkey was finally drafted. The reason for this is that we have been endeavouring to arrive at a preliminary agreement with the French Government in a series of conversations *à deux*, and that we cannot induce them to meet our wishes. Attention is invited to the minutes on the subject of the Mandates and the Arabian Treaty which will be found in E 11383 below.³ It was suggested in those papers that such parts of the proposed *Projet d'Arrangement* as were not already included in the Mandates should be embodied, either in the Mandates themselves, or in a separate Declaration to include the Arabian Articles. Sir Eyre Crowe, in his covering minute, expressed his agreement with this suggestion, which was approved by the Secretary of State.

The present position is that, owing to the impossibility of inducing the French Government to accept the minimum requirements of His Majesty's Government with regard to certain details in connection with Palestine, the definition of the frontiers has been excised from the Mandates and the *Projet d'Arrangement*, including the boundary question, is temporarily suspended. The actual definition of the boundaries must, by Articles 94 and 95 of the Turkish Treaty, be made by the Principal Allied Powers. The question that still presents itself is whether it is either expedient or technically correct for

³ These minutes by Major Young and others are not printed.

this method of conversation *à deux* to be employed. An indication of the resulting embarrassment which might ensue, even if we succeeded in coming to an agreement with the French, is offered by the fact that it is now considered necessary to think out special measures for harmonising the premature Anglo-French Oil Agreement, which has always been regarded with some apprehension by the Secretary of State, with the Mandatory principle.⁴ What is to be our answer if the American Government, urged thereto by the Zionist elements in America, object to the final definition of the frontiers of Palestine on the grounds that they cannot recognise that this is a question purely for the British and French Governments? The Treaty of Peace with Turkey provided that the Ottoman Empire renounced all rights over the Arab countries in favour of the Principal Allied Powers. The Principal Allied Powers evolved the Mandatory system and distributed Mandates which were to be laid before the League of Nations. So far so good, but they have made no provision, either for the boundaries; or for the disposal of the territories which do not fall within the mandated areas; or for the safeguards which must be imposed in one Mandatory area to ensure the economic development of its neighbours. If this contention were urged, either by the League of Nations or by the American Government it would be exceedingly difficult to answer. The suggestion referred to above i.e. that one comprehensive instrument should include all these provisions was made partly for this reason, and partly for the reason which was alluded to by Lord Robert Cecil in his speech the other night at the British Institute of International Affairs,⁵ that a conversation *à deux* gives opportunities for unreasonableness on the part of one of the negotiators which would not present themselves if there were outside participants.

At the same time it cannot be denied that the French Government and ourselves are far more closely interested than any other Power, and that it would clearly be desirable to obtain their previous acceptance of the settlement. The position would be entirely different if we could present the Council with an Anglo-French Agreement instead of a statement of differences. It is undesirable for every reason to summon a Conference of representatives of the Principal Allied Powers, or to lay the points in dispute before the League of Nations until we have exhausted all possibilities of arriving at a preliminary agreement with the French. Once this is done we can adhere to our policy of consulting the Principal Allied Powers in their capacity as members of the Council. We have now learnt by experience that the French will not meet us half way in conversations *à deux* limited to questions relating to the mandatory areas, but it is not necessary on that account to abandon all hope of arriving at a preliminary agreement with them. It is suggested that this might be done by inviting them to participate in discussions on questions in which we could legitimately claim a predominant

⁴ Cf. No. 286.

⁵ The reference may perhaps be to an intervention by Lord R. Cecil in the discussion following an address given by Sir M. Hankey at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on Nov. 2 on 'Diplomacy by Conference'.

interest, namely the boundaries of the Hedjaz and the relations of the Hedjaz with the adjoining independent areas of the Arabian Peninsula. This would postulate the participation of a representative of the Hedjaz in any discussion relating to the Hedjaz itself. It is not suggested that the Hedjaz should be consulted in any questions which relate primarily to the French and ourselves, nor that the French should be consulted with regard to other parts of Arabia beyond being invited to acknowledge, in the Agreement, our paramount interest in those regions. We have an opportunity of taking advantage of the approaching visit of Feisal to London, firstly to reassure him as to our own intentions, and secondly to resume the negotiations with the French in London on a broader basis, to include the Arabian Articles, on condition that the Hedjaz should participate where they are obviously concerned. If the French refuse, we shall at least have cleared ourselves of the charge of not inviting them to participate in our Arab policy, and we shall be free to conduct our own preliminary discussions with Hussein and other Arab rulers. If they accept, we shall be in a stronger position to obtain our desiderata in Palestine. In either case we have in reserve a possible appeal to the Principal Allied Powers, whether in their capacity as members of the League of Nations or not.

(iii) It is suggested that the following action should now be taken.

- (a) That the Secretary of State should write privately to Mr. Vansittart, saying that as the Paris negotiations appear to have come to a deadlock, and as his services are urgently required here, he should come to London at the first convenient opportunity; and that we now propose to take the matter up officially with M. Cambon.
- (b) That a Note should be addressed to M. Cambon, somewhat on the lines of the attached draft.⁶

H. W. YOUNG

⁶ Not printed. It was not sent. Sir John Tilley and Lord Curzon minuted as follows:

'It will be remembered that the course of events has been modified during the last two months by several decisions: e.g. (1) that the mandates must be simplified as far as possible; (2) that the question of the frontiers of Palestine & Mesopotamia, except that with Syria, should be deferred as long as possible owing to the innumerable difficulties raised in regard to the western frontier of Mesopotamia, no one wishing to announce that our Mesopotamian commitments extended from the Tigris to the Jordan & no one having any satisfactory alternative; (3) that the Principal Allied Powers should not be consulted about the Mandates except through the Council of the League.

'It was indeed inevitable that we should if we wished to preserve amicable relations with the French in the East, make every effort to settle the Palestine frontier with them *à deux*.

'It is not impossible that the French may before the 15th give way about the Yarmuk & Litany. If not I agree with Major Young that we might try the effect of an offer to bring them into our Arabian discussions with Hussein. If this reconciles them to the presence of Feisal in England we shall kill two birds with one stone.

'We shall if these negotiations come off have to make up our minds as to the fate of the area between Palestine proper and Mesopotamia proper & whether we are to include it in, or exclude it from, our mandated territories.

J. A. C. TILLEY
8. xi'

'I do not think that the French Govt. are in a mood for these negotiations.
'I would like to clear off the A Mandates [i.e. the mandates for Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia] and bring Mr. Vansittart home directly after to report.

C. 8/11.'

No. 333

Letter from Earl Curzon to Dr. Weizmann

[E 13514/4164/44]*

Confidential

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 8, 1920*

Sir,

I am directed by Earl Curzon of Kedleston to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th October regarding the frontiers of Palestine and the Palestine mandate.¹

Lord Curzon appreciates your arguments as to the importance, for the economic future of Palestine, of the unhampered use by that country of the waters of the Litani, the West Jordan and the Yarmuk. As you are aware, with this object prolonged negotiations have taken place with the French Government, who have indeed provisionally agreed to modify the frontiers between the French and British zones as laid down in the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916, by conceding to Palestine the Kasa of Safed and the waters of Lake Huleh and of the Jordan as far north as a line joining Metullah and Baniyas, the site of the Biblical Dan. The French Government have, however, refused to consent to the eastern frontier of Palestine, as laid down in the 1916 agreement, being extended either north of the Yarmuk valley or east of the Sea of Galilee, nor are they willing to conclude any formal agreement as to the utilisation by Palestine of the waters of the Yarmuk, North Jordan or Litani.

His Majesty's Government wish that they could see any prospect of the northern frontier, as provisionally agreed upon with the French Government, being further extended northwards; but they do not know how that Government can be induced to concede a boundary east of the Sea of Galilee and north of the Yarmuk valley, vital to the practical operations of the Zionist engineering plans as the inclusion of this territory in Palestine may well turn out to be.

At the same time, His Majesty's Government, as at present advised, are not prepared to conclude any arrangement which leaves the French Government free to refuse concessions for the utilisation by Palestine of waters outside her frontiers which are essential to her growth and prosperity. Nor do they consider that the justice of this attitude can be challenged when it is remembered that the exploitation of such concessions should benefit the neighbouring territory and populations; that the waters in question cannot be used for power-producing purposes, except by and for the advantage of the territory of Palestine, towards which they flow; and that the French Government have publicly endorsed the policy of establishing a national home for the Jews in

¹ No. 331.

Palestine, and may therefore be expected to support His Majesty's Government in creating conditions for the realisation of that policy.

For these reasons His Majesty's Government have decided that the conclusion of an arrangement with the French Government regarding these questions should for the present be deferred.

Lord Curzon will reserve a reply upon the other points for another letter.²

I am, &c.,

J. A. C. TILLEY

² See No. 354 below, n. 8.

No. 334

Earl Curzon to Mr. Vansittart (Paris)

*No. 168 [E 13621/4164/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 9, 1920*

Sir,

Your despatch No. 96 of the 21st October, reporting as to your negotiations with the French Foreign Office regarding the frontiers of Palestine and kindred matters, has been submitted to the Interdepartmental Committee for Palestine Affairs,¹ and has received my careful consideration.

2. His Majesty's Government are not prepared to conclude any arrangement which does not contain due provision for the future utilisation by Palestine of the waters of the Yarmuk and the Litani, which may well prove vital to the economic development of the country and the creation of a national home for the Jews. On the grounds explained in my despatch No. 163 of the 16th October² and in the enclosed copy of a correspondence with Dr. Weizmann,³ His Majesty's Government cannot but continue to regard the attitude of the French Government in this matter as unreasonable, but this very unreason makes argument impossible.

3. It happens that the French Chargé d'Affaires informed Sir John Tilley on the 3rd November that the French Government were anxious to lay their mandate and also the Anglo-French Convention before the Council of the League of Nations, and were now ready to do so. M. de Fleuriau was informed, in reply, that His Majesty's Government were practically ready to lay the Palestine and Mesopotamian mandates, but that they did not consider it necessary to lay the Anglo-French Convention at the same time. The question of the waters of the Yarmuk and Litani was still outstanding, and was one to which His Majesty's Government attached great importance. M. de Fleuriau had believed that this point had been settled, but was told that this was by no means the case.

4. The French Government are probably therefore conscious of the present situation, but you should inform the Foreign Office of the position taken up by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

¹ See No. 332, n. 1.

² No. 328.

³ See Nos. 331 and 333.

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 1218 Telegraphic [E 13872/4164/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 11, 1920, 3 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1309 (of November 8th.¹ 'A' mandates).

Following for Mr. Vansittart.

We are not convinced by French arguments which appear to be primarily directed towards forcing us to sign the convention and submit it to the League at the same time as the mandates. My despatch No. 168² explains grounds on which we are unable to accept convention in its present form. See also my telegram No. 1126 of October 22nd as to reasons for not submitting convention to the League for approval.¹

You should therefore point out to French Foreign Office that although legally French and English texts of covenant are of equal value, French text is well known to be a not very accurate translation of original English text and that English text of penultimate paragraph of Article 22 makes no mention of a 'convention'. We certainly cannot agree that French text can be relied on where it differs from the English version.

Both French Government and we are anxious to avoid necessity of a declaration signed by four Principal Allied Powers and our argument is that intention of English text of Article 22 of Covenant and Article 96 of Turkish Treaty will be sufficiently met by present proposed procedure of informal agreement between British and French Governments regarding terms of mandates and their subsequent submission for approval to the Council on which Principal Allied Powers are represented and where they will have an opportunity of offering comments if they wish. If any formal agreement be required (and we do not think it is) before submission to League, it can only be one to be signed by four Principal Allied Powers.

We do not believe that form of preamble will influence Council in their treatment of the mandate but French apprehensions would seem to be met by the omission of the penultimate sentence of the preamble—'whereas the Council has approved the terms of the mandate'³—and the substitution of the words 'Hereby approves the terms of the said mandate as follows'—for the words 'Hereby resolves as follows'.³ We will make this change if French agree.⁴

¹ Not printed.

² No. 334.

³ These changes had been suggested by the Foreign Office in a letter to Mr. Vansittart dated Oct. 15 and had been approved by the French Government on Oct. 16.

⁴ The changes were made in the Preamble; see Cmd. 1176 of 1921.

No. 336

Earl Curzon to Mr. Churchill¹ (Milan)

No. 35 Telegraphic [E 14076/2465/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 11, 1920, 10 p.m.*

Please inform Feisal that the King will be glad to receive him, but that His Majesty will not be able to do so before the 30th instant. A further telegram will be sent as to date.²

Repeated to Rome No. 500, Jerusalem No. 237, Jeddah No. 2, Cairo No. 947.

¹ H.M. Consul-General at Milan.

² Foreign Office telegram No. 36 of Nov. 17 instructed Mr. Churchill to inform the Emir Feisal that 'he should arrive in England at the end of the present month'.

No. 337

Mr. Vansittart (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received November 15)

No. 108 [E 14193/4164/44]

PARIS, *November 13, 1920*

My Lord,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of Your Lordship's despatch No. 168 which reached me yesterday,¹ and to submit the following considerations on the position which it appears to create.

I would with great deference point out that we cannot well leave the question in its present state. To do so would be to the disadvantage of all concerned.

If no Convention is concluded we are confronted with possibilities which appear both undesirable and dangerous. There will be no northern or north-eastern frontier of Palestine at all. Even the extension of the Sykes-Picot line hitherto offered by the French can only become effective in virtue of a new Convention. General Gouraud is now in Paris, and as I had the honour to indicate in my despatch No. 91 of October 7th,² it is more than possible that he will use his undoubted influence in the sense that France should get out of a concession which he considers excessive and which indeed comprises a large extent of land of real value to Palestine. Such a possibility cannot be in the interests of Zionism. Even if General Gouraud is unsuccessful, the frontier between Syria and Palestine could not be delimited except by the Boundary Commission provided for in the Convention. So long as the line is not accurately defined and laid down, the administrations of the two countries will be left with no demarcation of their activities, and with conflicting contentions of what that line should be. The inevitable local clash of views and interests could hardly fail to have a wider echo. That two regions where there are already so many possible sources of friction should be left

¹ No. 334.

² Not printed.

without a frontier seems an impossible position, even were it to be of short duration. As the matter now stands, and in default of any new move,—none is proposed in Your Lordship's above mentioned despatch—there is no ground for assuming that the duration will be anything but long, or even permanent: while there is every ground for seeing that an open question may be an open sore.

On the other hand, in the absence of any new Convention the legal position may be that the only valid agreement is the Sykes-Picot. There seems nothing else that can be acted upon. Even if the French keep open their offer to extend the line—of which I am doubtful—the Zionists could not now take up territory beyond the Sykes-Picot line, and we should in addition lose our railway agreement which is admittedly more satisfactory than anything provided for in the Sykes-Picot agreement. There will thus be loss all round and gain to no one, least of all to the Zionists. I fully appreciate the reasons given by Your Lordship for not signing the Convention. No one realises more clearly than I do how far it falls short of the maximum—which is perhaps also minimum—Zionist requirement. On the other hand, the Convention is better than nothing, plus the consequences of nothing, and I venture to think we should be justified in not signing it if we foresee the means of bettering it, but not otherwise. My previous despatches will have made it clear that the prevision and initiation of those means must come from our side. There is no real prospect of American representations—even if they are forthcoming—producing more result than ours. Dr. Weizmann says in his letter of October 30th³—‘I feel sure a satisfactory arrangement will yet be obtained if only a definite agreement is not now concluded.’ This hope also reposes on no visible basis, and amounts to ‘waiting for something to turn up’, which is what we have now been doing for many months.

It seems clear that we cannot obtain more without offering some inducement, which we have not yet done, and this being the situation that I anticipated last year, I would ask permission to revert to the considerations that I then advanced.

There *are* ways and means of bettering the Convention if we are prepared to face them. There is the possibility of a general deal; such for instance as the one I then tentatively suggested: the Gambia on the one hand, and on the other all the French settlements and *loges* in India, plus our Arabian desiderata and the Palestine frontier.⁴ Failing the possibility of anything of this nature, financial or military inducements or levers could, I think, be found. I do not develop these points at greater length because I do not know whether Your Lordship would contemplate the principle.

A bargain might be made as a defensible business proposition with a minimum of concession on our part: but some concession would now seem necessary if we are to go forward, and, as indicated above, it is difficult for us either to go back or stand still without undesirable consequences. I therefore feel justified in re-submitting my last year's view: if His Majesty's

³ No. 331.

⁴ For unofficial suggestions for such a ‘general deal’, see Vol. IV, No. 324.

Government believe in Zionism and the solidarity of Jewish gratitude to the extent of increasing friction with France on Zionist account, then logically some sacrifice must be worth while to attain those objects; if, on the other hand, His Majesty's Government cannot in practice believe in the permanent political value of those objects, it is illogical to keep up the friction which must be the result of the absence of a Convention. Such an instrument seems a necessity for practical working purposes.

I have ventured to deal with this subject at some length, because wider issues are involved in it. A continuance of the present *impasse* can hardly fail to re-act on Anglo-French relations.

I had written the foregoing when sending my telegram No. 1320 of the 11th instant to Your Lordship.⁵ I decided however to suspend this despatch until to-day, in order to include in it an account of my meeting at the French Foreign Office this evening, when I communicated the message in Your Lordship's despatch No. 168.⁶ The effect was that foreshadowed in the earlier part of this despatch. I report it at some length, since it explains more outspokenly than before the fundamentally different point from which the French Government judge the issue, and how therefore all reasoning has been [in] vain with it. Further comment seems superfluous. Monsieur Kammerer, speaking for Monsieur Berthelot, said that Monsieur [de] Fleuriau had not given them such a clear indication of the attitude of His Majesty's Government as your Lordship appeared to think.

Monsieur Berthelot had, however, augured that the Convention was going ill, and was therefore ready to reply to me at once. If there had been any question of reiterated demands on our part, he would have met them, as indicated in my despatch No. 107 of Nov. 8,⁵ by 'a categoric and immediate *non possumus*', that would make it once more abundantly—he had hoped it was already sufficiently—clear that France would not give way by one iota more on these points. Your Lordship's despatch did not however renew demands, but left the Convention in the air. If it remained there the French would consider themselves liberated from the obligations imposed upon them in it, and if the matter was reopened it would have to be *de novo*. General Gouraud had been that morning to the Foreign Office to ask the French Government urgently if they could not get out of the Convention. The answer had been 'No—unless the English refuse it.' The French Government considered that the advantages of the Convention were all on our side, whether looked upon from the point of the cession of the potential cotton lands of the Huleh, or from that of the railway clauses, or from that of the Yarmuk clause, on which M. Berthelot already regretted having agreed to any stipulation. The French Government had no interest in signing, but they would keep their inchoate engagements if we wished. If a rupture came from our side they would be material gainers, for they would be free to, and would, simply revert to the Sykes-Picot line, up to which they were already in practical occupation. It was added that the French refusal to go beyond their present offers was perhaps more fundamental than we understood, and

⁵ Not printed.

⁶ No. 334.

that it was useless for me to put forward again the economic arguments to which they had often listened. The French Government could not view the matter in that light, for in their view it went much deeper. They had agreed to a Jewish National Home, not to a Jewish State. They considered we were steering straight upon the latter, and the very last thing they would do was to enlarge that State, for they totally disapproved our policy. They might eventually have to make representations to us on this point as the policy was full of dangers for them too. For the present they contented themselves with saying, 'Vous barbotterez si vous le voulez, mais vous ne barbotterez pas à nos frais.'⁷ Mr. Kammerer here produced a memorandum and map left by Mr. Rutenberg⁸ with M. Millerand, and quoted from it to prove that the Zionists were already openly beyond the idea of a National Home. (The memorandum might perhaps have been better worded. I had not seen it before and only got a fugitive glance at it.) As to the map, he exclaimed that the territory claimed as economically indispensable went north of Damascus. He repeated again most categorically that the French Government would never lend an ear to what he characterised as 'extravagances'. Nor would they consent to the Sionists [*sic*] carrying out works *chez nous*. They would listen to any reasonable proposal for an equitable distribution of water, but they would do their own work in their own house.

The claims of the Zionists, he said, now went far beyond the ground on which the British Prime Minister had always placed himself, and on which the French Government considers they had met him—the historic formula, Dan to Beersheba. To make the bigger Jewish State, of which the French disapproved, the Zionists continued to claim territory to which the historic argument did not apply. If the British Prime Minister were now to say that he did not consider a moral agreement had been reached on this point, the French Government would follow suit without reluctance, though the French Foreign Office would regret the disappearance of the Convention, as they considered it conducive to terms of *bon voisinage*.

In the discussion to which I endeavoured to divert this outpouring, I could achieve no modification of the French attitude in regard to frontiers and water supply; but Mr. Kammerer repeated that the French Government were still ready to sign the Convention, in spite of contrary pressure, but that pressure would continue and for other reasons as well the French Government trusted that His Majesty's Government would realise that the offer could not be kept open indefinitely.

The foregoing would tend to show that a further move on our part would shortly be advisable.

I have, &c.,
ROBERT VANSITTART

⁷ You will flounder if you like, but you will not flounder at our expense.

⁸ See No. 331, n. 3.

No. 338

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received November 17, 11.50 a.m.)

No. 1094 *Telegraphic* [E 14323/9/44]

CAIRO, November 16, 1920, 2.15 p.m.

I consider it would help to restore our good relations with King Hussein and would revive his confidence in good intentions of His Majesty's Government towards him if he were now invited to London where he could be invested with G.C.B. by His Majesty.

Such an invitation might indeed induce him to sign Peace Treaty and visit would tend to broaden his political ideas.

I suggest that invitation be sent to him now but that date of his visit should be next Spring when weather will be more favourable.

No. 339

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

No. 3724 [W 2113/1946/17]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 16, 1920

My Lord,

The French Ambassador, M. Cambon, called on me on the 11th November in order to announce his impending retirement, and to ask me to give the requisite *agrément* to his contemplated successor, Comte de Saint-Aulaire.

I expressed on behalf not only of myself, but, as I felt that I had a right to do, on behalf of the whole of my predecessors who for nearly a quarter of a century had been brought into official relations with M. Cambon, our profound regret at the termination of his long and illustrious diplomatic career, marked as it had been not only by a personal distinction which it would be hard for any successor to emulate, but by a consistent friendliness to Great Britain and a sympathetic understanding of our national character and institutions, which had been one of the principal agents in building up the cordial alliance between our two countries, culminating in the glorious co-operation of the recent war.

I viewed, I said, with some apprehension the loss of M. Cambon's calm judgment and restraining hand, because, as I had told M. de Fleuriau only a few days before,¹ I was seriously disturbed at the recent explosions of anti-British feeling in the French press, known in some cases to have been directly inspired, and in many more quite unchecked, by the Quai d'Orsay. I mentioned 'Pertinax'² in particular to M. Cambon, as I had done to M. de Fleuriau, and, without wishing to attach exaggerated importance to any individual, I was bound to designate him as the worst and most incorrigible example of the abuse which I deplored. I once more asked M. Cambon in

¹ See Vol. X, No. 397.

² *Nom de plume* of M. André Géraud.

the last months of his service to use his influence with his Government to stop this malicious campaign, which was already doing great injury, and would, unless stopped, do more.

Neither now nor on previous occasions did M. Cambon attempt any denial of my accusations. Indeed, the only explanation that he could offer was the psychological idiosyncrasy which compelled a Frenchman, when he distrusted or disliked a policy, to attack a person. The French journalist, he said, always associated a policy with an individual, and could not be brought to understand that, in attacking the latter, he might not merely be doing a personal injustice, but injuring a national interest.

I dare say there was truth in this analysis; but it did not leave me with any great hope either that any exertions of M. Cambon or any words of mine could effect [*sic*]³ so inscrutable a factor as the mentality of the Frenchman.

Before parting, I seized the occasion to make an explanation to M. Cambon, which I begged him to transmit to his Government, so as to remove in advance any misapprehension which they might otherwise be tempted to entertain. I told him that it was likely that, within a short time, the Emir Feisal might visit this country. We had deferred the visit as long as possible, out of regard for the French, and because we did not wish in the smallest degree to offend their susceptibilities, acting, as we had done throughout the recent Syrian developments, with perfect loyalty to them, and with an unquestioning acceptance of their action, whether it had or had not met with our complete approval. In the same spirit we had hitherto kept Feisal away from England, and encouraged his sojourn in Italy, where he still remained.

But his father, King Hussein, had some time ago definitely appointed Feisal as head of a mission to make certain return presents to our King, and was exceedingly vexed at our apparent reluctance to receive him in this honorific capacity. We could find no excuse for further postponement, and the King had agreed to receive the Emir early in December.⁴

I thought that there would be one great advantage in this arrangement, viz., that Feisal would thereby be deterred from going to Geneva, as representative of the Hejaz at the assembly of the League of Nations. His presence and still more his speech there might be the reverse of convenient to the French Government; and they should, I thought, welcome any prior engagement that would keep him away.

I further told M. Cambon that, though the Emir would be coming here on a complimentary mission, I had no doubt that he would wish to discuss with us, and equally we with him, certain aspects of the Arabian question. We had given definite promises to his father as to the future of the Arab countries, which promises had brought him into the war, and both Hussein and Feisal had a perfect right to discuss with us the manner in which they were still capable of being redeemed. Further, there remained a large block of Arab territory between or adjoining the spheres of French and British influence in Syria and Mesopotamia, as to the future of which discussion might take place and arrangements might require to be made.

³ In the draft this word read: 'affect'.

⁴ Cf. No. 336.

I told M. Cambon with absolute candour that these were the prospects. But I gave him one assurance for communication to his Government, viz., that we did not intend to discuss with Feisal the position, past or present, in Syria within the limits of the French mandate. That we regarded as a *chose jugée* after the decisions of the San Remo Conference.

M. Cambon listened to these explanations with unmoved tranquillity, but offered neither remark nor reply.⁵

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

⁵ In his despatch No. 3767 of Nov. 19 (not printed) Lord Curzon informed Lord Derby that in a conversation with Sir E. Crowe on Nov. 16 M. Cambon had said that, his Government having consulted Gen. Gouraud, 'he had been instructed to express the earnest hope that Feisal would not be invited to London, but encouraged to remain in Italy'. Sir E. Crowe had again explained the position as set out by Lord Curzon in his conversation with M. Cambon on Nov. 11.

No. 340

Mr. Vansittart (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received November 17)

No. 109 [E 14317/4164/44]

PARIS, November 16, 1920

My Lord,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's despatch No. 170 of November 12th, transmitting to me a copy of the 14th Minutes of the Interdepartmental Committee.¹ These Minutes seem to show that there still exists some misconception of the Palestine question between His Majesty's Government and the French Government, and I venture therefore to add somewhat to my despatch No. 108 of November 11th [13th].²

I see it stated in those Minutes that the Convention is 'almost entirely a one-sided document'. I should have been glad of some elaboration of this point, for if it could have been proved that the advantage of it lay with the French, it would have been most helpful to me in my negotiations. As it is, they have always maintained that it is indeed one-sided—to their detriment; and that we are always the askers. I think it might be hard to point to any advantage we have so far offered them.

From this misconception, as I venture to think it, flows the second, with which the Minutes end, viz., that the French Government 'are more anxious than His Majesty's Government to secure the signature of the agreement'. I trust my above mentioned despatch may have made it clear that this is not the case. The French will not regret if, by a refusal or long hesitation to conclude on our part, they find occasion to withdraw under pressure from a bargain in which they so far can show no advantage to themselves.

¹ This covering despatch has not been preserved in Foreign Office archives and the enclosure is not here printed. For the Inter-departmental Committee see Nos. 332 and 334.

² No. 337.

I have also the honour to add the following commentary on my despatch No. 108, in case it might be deemed possible that the matter should become easier by delay. It will certainly become worse. We cannot hope that by holding our hand the French will come to eat out of it, when there is nothing in it. Apart from that the matter will become more difficult for the following reason.

Your Lordship will have observed from my despatch No. 108 that at my last meeting the French came more into the open than ever before. Reduced to barest terms the proposition is that the French are increasingly anti-Zionist. They mistrust and fear our whole policy in Palestine. (Incidentally they mistrust and fear our Arab policy too.) They believe that we are in a direct train of making an all Jewish State, as opposed to a National Home. Much of their information in regard to our action in Palestine is based on false, perhaps deliberately false, local information; and I have had occasion to show up the deception (See for example my letter to Sir John Tilley of October 15th,³ and Mr. Forbes Adam's reply of October 20th³). Argument on this point is, however, not very fruitful. The French merely think and say that even if we are not going that way now, we shall either go or be pushed there later. They do not and will not believe in any ultimate possibility of keeping out undesirables, and remain obstinately convinced that they are going to have a Bolshevik colony on their flank. (Your Lordship will have noticed from my despatch that Syria is currently described as 'chez nous', and a System prepared at the Quai d'Orsay is already well advanced for application to it. I do not need to dwell on this further divergence of conception. We should not describe ourselves as 'at home' in Mesopotamia.)

The French are therefore determined that this 'Bolshevik colony' shall be as small as possible, and conceive this necessary for their own safety. This apprehension will only deepen with their difficulties in Syria, where they are at present still patting themselves on the back for having knocked out Feisal.

It is this fundamental view rather than any superficial desire to haggle about waters, that has lain at the root of their attitude throughout the negotiations, and now emerges clearly. It will not therefore be easy to remove even by the bargain, but I think it can be done. It can assuredly only be done that way, and I therefore trust that the review contained in my immediately preceding despatch will receive consideration.

I have, &c.,

ROBERT VANSITTART

³ Not printed.

No. 341

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 258 Telegraphic [E 14193/4164/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 19, 1920, 10 p.m.*

Mr. Vansittart's despatch No. 96 to the Foreign Office (Anglo-French Convention).¹

¹ Not printed; cf. No. 334.

We do not propose to sign the convention in its present form, but before definitely deciding to leave the questions provided for in it undecided we should be glad of your views. What is your estimate of value of convention in its present form from point of view of Palestine? Is there any local concession which you would suggest our offering to the French in order to induce them to agree to insertion of some provision safeguarding Palestine's right to use waters of Litani and Yarmuk for power purposes even if they fall outside frontiers of Palestine?²

² In his telegram No. 391 of Nov. 27 (not printed) Sir H. Samuel replied that there was no local territorial or commercial concession which he could suggest, 'but appropriate *quid pro quo* might be found in supply of electric power to French zone'.

No. 342

Foreign Office Memorandum on possible negotiations with the Hedjaz

[E 14959/9/44]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 29, 1920

1. The approaching visit of the Emir Feisal to this country, and the possibility of conversations being opened with him about the future of the Hedjaz and possibly Arabia, render it necessary for His Majesty's Government to decide what line these discussions should follow.

It is necessary at the outset to make a clear distinction between two possible heads of discussion.

The first would be directed towards obtaining the concurrence of the Hedjaz in the general principles on which the Peace Treaties are based, and more particularly in the mandatory principle; and also in the provisions for the disposal of the remaining Arab areas in Asia over which the Ottoman Government is to renounce all rights in favour of the Principal Allied Powers.

The second would be directed towards the conclusion of a permanent treaty between His Majesty's Government and the independent State of the Hedjaz as defined in the eventual settlement by the Principal Allied Powers.

These two suggested heads of discussion will be considered in order, paragraphs 2 to 15 dealing with the first and paragraph 16 with the second.

2. The main difficulty in inducing the Hedjaz to accept the provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres which deal with the territories inhabited by Arab-speaking peoples is the fact that His Majesty's Government have already made certain declarations on the subject of the disposal of these territories, and that the provisions of the treaty are regarded by King Hussein as inconsistent with these declarations. The areas affected by previous correspondence between His Majesty's Government and King Hussein (see Appendix B)¹ are Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Arabia, including the Hedjaz itself. The articles of the Treaty of Sèvres which deal with Syria, Mesopotamia and

¹ Not printed. For this correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sherif Hussein of Mecca, July 1915—March 1916, see Cmd. 5957 of 1939.

Palestine are articles 94 to 97, which are based upon article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations; those dealing with the Hedjaz are articles 98 to 100, 367 and 428; and that dealing with Arabia is article 132 (see Appendix C).² These articles, like the remainder of the treaty, are based upon the fact that Turkey was defeated in the war by the Principal Allied Powers. The same principle has guided the provisions of the German, Austrian, Hungarian and Bulgarian treaties, and the first essential is to induce King Hussein to recognise that this is the correct procedure for the disposal of territories freed by the Allied armies.

3. King Hussein does not admit the right of the Principal Allied Powers as such to dispose of the territories referred to above (see Appendix A). His contention is that His Majesty's Government implicitly recognised him as the spokesman for those territories by the correspondence preceding the Arab revolt. He considers that he has committed himself in the eyes of all Arab Moslems by revolting from the authority of the Caliph of Islam; that he was led to do this on the strength of pledges given to him by the British Government; that the British Government are responsible for carrying out those pledges; and that his acceptance of a settlement which conflicts with the aspirations which he has himself encouraged would be the death-blow of his prestige among the Arab peoples. He has never raised any objection to the principle of British assistance to the Arab movement; on the contrary, he has always welcomed it; and if it were only a question of reconciling him to the mandatory principle in its application to spheres of British interest our difficulties would be immeasurably lessened. It is the extension of this principle to the French Government which is the real stumbling block, and if we can only induce him to acquiesce in this extension we shall go a long way towards achieving our object. But this will not be an easy task. Hussein is an obstinate man, and almost unapproachable by ordinary methods of argument (see concluding paragraph of Appendix B, page 15).³ No direct correspondence between London and Jeddah would have the smallest chance of success. The only hope is to convince Feisal first, and to leave it to him either to persuade his father, or, if this proves impossible, to find some other way out. The exact point in the negotiations at which Hussein should be asked to authorise Feisal to negotiate on his behalf must be decided later.

With regard to such portions of the areas within the British sphere of influence as are shown hereafter to be covered by the undertakings entered

² Not here printed.

³ This observed that the sentence in Sir H. McMahon's letter of March 10, 1916, to the Sherif Hussein (No. 10 in Cmd. 5957 of 1939) which ran as follows: 'I am pleased to be able to inform you that His Majesty's Government have approved of meeting your requests' had 'since been quoted on more than one occasion by King Hussein as an unconditional acceptance by His Majesty's Government of the political demands made by him in his original letter. This contention is an indication of the mentality with which we have to deal and any attempt at negotiation which does not take this into account is doomed to failure.' The 'requests' which H.M.G. were here agreeing to meet were those listed in King Hussein's letter of Feb. 18 (No. 9 in Cmd. 5957) and covered immediate requirements of money, provisions and munitions.

into by Sir H. McMahon, there is a further consideration which it is necessary to emphasise at this point. This is that Hussein's faith in the sincerity of the British Government, and consequently in their professions regarding the British spheres, has been rudely shaken by their acquies[c]ence as one of the Principal Allied Powers in the allotment of the Syrian Mandate to the French. He is inclined to regard this as an indication that they have identified themselves with what he suspects to be the trend of French policy, namely the suppression of Arab nationality. This will make it more difficult for His Majesty's Government to reassure him now that their own policy towards the populations of the areas under their control, and towards the Arab rulers already in relations with them, is unchanged. It is not suggested that by this reassurance Hussein should be led to suppose that His Majesty's Government are prepared to reconsider the application of the mandatory principle to their own areas, any more than they would be to the French area. Nor is it proposed to give him any reason to think that His Majesty's Government would for a moment contemplate recognising his authority over independent Arab rulers who do not themselves acquiesce in it.

4. Article 132 of the Turkish Peace Treaty provides that—

‘Outside her frontiers as fixed by the present treaty, Turkey hereby renounces in favour of the Principal Allied Powers all rights and title which she could claim on any ground over or concerning any territories outside Europe which are not otherwise disposed of by the present treaty.

‘Turkey undertakes to recognise and conform to the measures which may be taken now or in the future by the Principal Allied Powers in agreement where necessary with third Powers in order to carry the above stipulations into effect.’

The ‘territories outside Europe which are not otherwise disposed of by the present treaty’ may be defined as the Peninsula of Arabia, so far as it originally formed part of the Ottoman Empire, excluding the Hedjaz itself, but including the strip of territory whether it be regarded as part of the Arabian Peninsula or not, which is bounded by the mandatory areas of Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia. This strip of territory has not hitherto been regarded by His Majesty's Government as falling within the Peninsula of Arabia, since it lies within the area allotted by the Sykes-Picot Treaty to the British sphere of influence, but it cannot be said to have been ‘otherwise disposed of by the present treaty’, since it does not fall within either of the three areas for which mandates have been allotted.

5. The exclusion of the Hedjaz itself from the territories which still require settlement is based upon article 98 of the Turkish treaty, which provides that—

‘Turkey, in accordance with the action already taken by the Allied Powers, hereby recognises the Hedjaz as a free and independent State, and renounces in favour of the Hedjaz all rights and titles over the territories of the former Turkish Empire situated outside the frontiers of Turkey as

laid down by the present treaty and comprised within the boundaries which may ultimately be fixed.’

Two difficulties arise out of this article.

The first is that King Hussein regards the boundaries of the ‘Arab Kingdom’ as including the mandatory areas of Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia: that he has not yet ratified the Treaty of Versailles and has thus refrained from legal recognition of the mandatory principle: and that he has not yet signed the Treaty of Sèvres, far less ratified it.

The second is that, until the boundaries of a State have been fixed, the recognition of its freedom and independence is more or less meaningless. This was recognised by the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva, when, on the suggestion of M. Viviani, they unanimously stipulated that the definition of the frontiers of a State was one of the essential preliminaries to its eligibility as a member of the League of Nations.⁴

6. With regard to the first of these difficulties, it is submitted that the argument to use with Feisal or Hussein is that unless and until the Hedjaz has ratified the Treaty of Versailles, and thus accepted the mandatory principle enunciated in article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, it is impossible for the Principal Allied Powers to regard it for any purpose as a ‘third Power’ under article 132 of the Treaty of Sèvres. The purpose for which His Majesty’s Government would be prepared to recognise the Hedjaz in this capacity is the definition of the boundaries between the Hedjaz and the remainder of the area. The only basis upon which either His Majesty’s Government or the Principal Allied Powers can invite the Hedjaz to participate in discussions on these boundaries is that it should at least accept the principle on which all the peace treaties have been based, namely, disposal by the Principal Allied Powers of territory over which the enemy Power concerned renounces all rights.

7. With regard to the second difficulty, namely, that the boundaries of the Hedjaz have not yet been defined, it is submitted that the argument to use with Feisal or Hussein is that independence in an undefined area is of little value for practical purposes. While His Majesty’s Government adhere to their recognition of the independence of the Hedjaz, and have no doubt that not only the other Allied Powers, but also the enemy Powers will shortly have accorded similar recognition, on the ratification of the Treaty of Sèvres, it is clearly desirable that the area within which this independence is to be recognised should be accurately defined.

The areas bordering on the Hedjaz are the British mandatory areas of Palestine and Transjordan and the territories of Ibn Rashid, Ibn Saud and the Idrisi. The two last-named of these rulers have agreed to accept the arbitration of His Majesty’s Government in frontier questions, and the first-named has announced his intention of visiting the High Commissioner of Mesopotamia at Nasiriyeh, where it is anticipated that he also will be induced to accept the same arbitration.

⁴ M. Viviani was a member of the French delegation to the First Assembly of the League of Nations and a member of Committee No. 5 on the admission of new States.

King Hussein has recently professed himself ready to abide by this arbitration, and it is submitted that he should now be invited to confirm these professions. He should be informed that His Majesty's Government propose to embody provisions to this effect in the proposals to be submitted by them to the Principal Allied Powers for the ultimate disposal of the Arabian Peninsula. They are confident that King Hussein, in view of his repeated protestations that he will deal with the British Government and none other, would prefer this solution of the boundary question. They themselves would also prefer it. They suggest that a preliminary agreement between themselves and him to the effect that the boundaries of the Hedjaz shall be defined by British arbitration, would be to his advantage no less than to their own. They are prepared to enter into such a preliminary agreement with him, and to support to the Principal Allied Powers the argument that the Hedjaz is for this purpose the third Power referred to in article 132 of the Treaty of Sèvres, but they will not be in a position to take this line unless the Hedjaz signs and ratifies that treaty as well as the Treaty of Versailles.

8. It will be seen from the two foregoing paragraphs that the first object of the proposed discussions is to induce the Hedjaz to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and to sign and ratify the Treaty of Sèvres.

Before discussing the objections which will probably be raised by Hussein and Feisal to the Hedjaz taking this course, and the answers which might be made to these objections, it should be remarked in passing that no argument is of itself likely to produce the desired result, unless the prospect is also held out of a permanent treaty to be concluded by His Majesty's Government with the independent State of the Hedjaz, concurrently with, or immediately after, the settlement of the outstanding questions arising from the Turkish treaty. The permanent treaty would relate entirely to purely local questions, which are discussed in paragraph 16. It is only mentioned here as an additional inducement to Hussein or Feisal to accept the principles on which the whole peace settlement has been based.

9. The first point to consider is the extent to which His Majesty's Government are already pledged. Hussein's point of view was originally set forth in the enclosure to his letter addressed to Mr. Storrs on the 14th July, 1915, which is quoted in Appendix B.⁵ It has been repeated by him on more than one occasion, notably in his communication of the 28th August, 1918, to Sir Reginald Wingate, in which is enclosed a so-called 'agreement come to with the British Government regarding the rising and its foundation' (see Appendix A). This communication entirely ignores the correspondence arising out of his original letter. The fact is that no actual agreement was ever arrived at. Letters were exchanged between Hussein and Sir H. McMahon, at that time His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo, and the relevant portions of the ten letters which form the original correspondence are quoted in Appendix B.

It will be seen from these extracts that, although no actual agreement was arrived at, certain definite undertakings were given on behalf of His Majesty's

⁵ See No. 1 in Cmd. 5957.

Government by Sir H. McMahon in his letter of the 25th [24th] October, 1915,⁶ and it has been publicly stated on more than one occasion that His Majesty's Government regard these undertakings as binding upon them. It will be more convenient to consider the present bearing of these undertakings on Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Arabia separately.

10. To take Syria first: the letter dated the 25th [24th] October, 1915, from Sir H. McMahon to the Shereef excludes from the territories over which Great Britain is prepared to recognise and support the independence of the Arabs the districts of Mersina and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Hama, Homs and Aleppo. It also makes it clear that there are portions even of the remaining territories in which Great Britain is not free to act without detriment to the interests of her ally, France. There can therefore be no question of His Majesty's Government having included any part of the territory now under the French mandate in the area in which they bound themselves to recognise the independence of the Arabs. The coastal areas were specially excluded by name and the hinterland was excluded on the ground of French interests.

The pledges of His Majesty's Government to the French, originally formulated in the Agreement of 1916 (Appendix D),⁷ have now been fulfilled by their concurrence in the allotting of a mandate for Syria to the French. The only substantial modifications have been the inclusion of the Mosul vilayet in the British instead of the French sphere, and the substitution of a British mandate for an international régime in Palestine, in both of which the French Government have concurred.

Neither of these modifications has enlarged the area in which French interests were originally recognised. On the contrary, this area has been considerably reduced. King Hussein, in his letter of the 1st January, 1916, said that at the first opportunity after the war was finished he would ask His Majesty's Government for what he then left to France in Beirout and its coasts. He was informed in reply that when the victory had been won the friendship of Great Britain and France would become yet more firm and enduring.⁸

It is submitted that it should now be made clear to him that His Majesty's Government have no intention of interposing in a question in which the French Government alone are concerned. They undertook by the Anglo-French Agreement of 1916 (Appendix D) to disinterest themselves in certain areas in which the French then claimed a prior interest. Subsequent discussions reduced this French claim to a considerable extent. In addition to this, His Majesty's Government used every effort to induce the French Government to accept the Emir Feisal as the first ruler of the area in which the French themselves have undertaken by the Sykes-Picot Agreement to recognise and uphold an independent Arab State or a confederation of Arab States under the suzerainty of an Arab Chief. They have even subjected themselves to considerable criticism for having taken this action and they

⁶ No. 4 in Cmd. 5957.

⁷ Not printed. For this Agreement, commonly known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see Vol. IV, Introductory Note to Chap. II.

⁸ Nos. 7 and 8 in Cmd. 5957.

cannot possibly reopen the question. They also regret that they can hold out no hope of their being in a position to discuss any arguments based upon the action of the British military authorities during the temporary occupation of the French sphere by the Allied forces under the command of Field-Marshal Lord Allenby. The decision of the French Government to sever all connection between Feisal and Syria must be recognised by His Majesty's Government as final. The Principal Allied Powers, who, as the victors in the war with Turkey, have claimed and still claim the right to dispose of the liberated territories, have unanimously accepted the French claim to assist in the development of the independent State of Syria, and His Majesty's Government have no intention of receding from that position. They have no reason to doubt that the French Government are inspired by the same motives as themselves, and the question of the election of an Arab ruler for Syria is one for the French Government and for the French Government alone. No undertaking given by the British Government to King Hussein, even if it had not been expressly stipulated that it did not apply to the sphere of French interest, can be held to bind the French Government.

11. His Majesty's Government are, however, free to take up with the Hedjaz the further conversations foreshadowed in Sir H. McMahon's letter of the 25th January, 1916,⁹ so far as their own sphere is concerned, provided that these conversations are regarded as preliminary to and not in supersession of the ultimate disposal by the Principal Allied Powers under article 132 of the Treaty of Sèvres, and provided that the mandatory principle is accepted.

With regard to Palestine, a literal interpretation of Sir H. McMahon's undertaking would exclude from the areas in which His Majesty's Government were prepared to recognise the 'independence of the Arabs' only that portion of the Palestine mandatory area which lies to the west of the 'district of Damascus'. The western boundary of the district of Damascus before the war was a line bisecting the lakes of Huleh and Tiberias; following the course of the Jordan; bisecting the Dead Sea; and following the Wadi Araba to the Gulf of Akaba. The southern boundary of the district of Damascus cut across the Hedjaz railway between Ma'an and Tabuk. The eastern boundary was undefined, but may be taken as identical with the edge of the desert.

It is thus difficult for His Majesty's Government to refute the contention that they are pledged by Sir H. McMahon's undertakings to acknowledge the 'independence of the Arabs' in Transjordan.¹⁰ No reservation was made by Sir H. McMahon to the effect that special measures of administrative control were necessary in this area, but he stated clearly in his letter of the 25th October that—

'When the situation admits Great Britain will give to the Arabs her advice and will assist them to establish what may appear to be the most suitable forms of government in those various territories.

⁹ No. 8 in Cmd. No. 5957.

¹⁰ For a letter of July 22, 1937, from Sir H. McMahon stating that his pledge was not intended to include Palestine, see *The Times*, July 23, 1937, p. 17. This letter is reproduced in Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs*, p. 173.

‘On the other hand, it is understood that the Arabs have decided to seek the advice and guidance of Great Britain only, and that such European advisers and officials as may be required for the formation of a sound form of administration will be British.’

Hussein never objected to this formula, which is in effect a statement of the mandatory principle. It is submitted that the argument to use with King Hussein about Transjordan is that in so far as His Majesty’s Government regarded him at the commencement of the Arab revolt as the only spokesman for the Arab territories, they are prepared to explain to him the measures which they have taken and propose to take in such of the Arab territories as they conceive to be covered by their original undertaking. Palestine itself, west of the Jordan, was specifically excluded from those territories by Sir H. McMahon’s letter of the 25th October, lying as it does to the west of the ‘district of Damascus’. Whatever may be the policy of His Majesty’s Government in Palestine, they are only concerned to explain to Hussein what their policy will be in Transjordan. This policy remains identical with that outlined by Sir H. McMahon, namely, to recognise and support the independence of the inhabitants, and to advise and assist them to establish what may appear to be the most suitable forms of government, on the understanding that they seek the advice and guidance of Great Britain only, and that such European advisers and officials as they may require shall be exclusively British.

Transjordan is economically dependent upon Palestine and it will be for the local authorities of Transjordan to settle with His Majesty’s Government, as the supreme authority in Palestine, the basis of the future relations between the two territories. It may well prove to be the case that the old Turkish boundary is recognised by both parties as unsuitable to the new conditions. It may well be thought desirable for an economic alliance on a basis of mutual accommodation to be entered into between them. These are questions for them to decide, and Hussein may rest assured that in the solution of any questions which may arise between the two authorities concerned, nothing will be done by His Majesty’s Government in conflict with their original undertakings to him as the spokesman of the Arab peoples.

There remains the question of the frontier between Transjordan and the Hedjaz. This again is primarily a question between the Hedjaz Government and the authorities of Transjordan, but His Majesty’s Government are prepared in this case, as in the corresponding case of the frontiers between the Hedjaz and the territories of independent Arab rulers, to arbitrate in any matter in dispute provided that both King Hussein and the authorities of Transjordan agree to abide by their arbitration.

12. With regard to Mesopotamia the literal interpretation of Sir H. McMahon’s undertaking would include all three vilayets of Mosul, Bagdad, and Basra in the areas in which His Majesty’s Government were prepared to recognise the ‘independence of the Arabs’, subject to the proviso made by him in his letter of the 25th October:—

‘With regard to the vilayets of Bagdad and Basra, the Arabs will recognise that the established position and interests of Great Britain necessitate special measures of administrative control, in order to secure these territories from foreign aggression; to promote the welfare of the local populations, and to safeguard our mutual economic interests.’

It is submitted that the argument to use with King Hussein about Mesopotamia should follow the general lines suggested in the case of Transjordan, so far as it relates to a reaffirmation of the original undertaking given by His Majesty’s Government. It is clear that the argument would be enormously strengthened in both cases if we could add that the choice of a ruler for each of these areas is to be left to the inhabitants themselves, and that if they were to select a member of the Shereefian family for this position, His Majesty’s Government would not only offer no objection, but would cordially welcome this solution.

An additional point that might be made in regard to Mesopotamia is that His Majesty’s Government have succeeded in inducing the French to renounce their claims over the Mosul vilayet.

It is quite possible that Hussein may revert to his original claim that some payment should be made to him as a return for British control in Mesopotamia. His Majesty’s Government are not in any way committed to this principle, which remains quite unacceptable. At the same time it cannot be denied that Hussein has lost financially as a result of the war and that it is desirable that some steps should be taken to compensate him for this loss. Further reference to this subject will be found in paragraph 16, where the possibility of financial assistance to the Hedjaz is discussed in connection with the proposed permanent treaty.

13. It is difficult to make final proposals for the line which the explanation of our policy in Mesopotamia should follow until we have further information from Bagdad on the local political situation. It is not suggested in any case that any mention whatever should be made of Mesopotamia to Feisal or Hussein until the High Commissioner at Bagdad has been given an opportunity of expressing his views. The High Commissioner for Palestine must also be invited to express his opinion on anything that may be said with regard to Transjordan, and it may be considered advisable to consult both High Commissioners at an early date. In view of the fact that Mesopotamia is at present under the direction of the Secretary of State for India, the previous concurrence of the India Office is essential, and the first step appears to be to consult them, either by letter or possibly by a meeting of the Eastern Committee.

It has already been suggested that in the case both of Transjordan and Mesopotamia the arguments of His Majesty’s Government would be greatly strengthened if they could announce their readiness to concur in the selection by the people of the country of a member of the Shereefian family for their ruler. It might even be possible to go further than this, and to assure Hussein that His Majesty’s Government would offer no objection to conversations

being initiated between the native authorities of the two mandated areas and the Hedjaz Government on questions of common interest, provided that nothing in these discussions was inconsistent with the mandatory principle, and that no conclusions should be arrived at without the concurrence of His Majesty's Government.

14. To turn to the question of Arabia itself. Sir H. McMahon's letter of the 25th October provides the necessary safeguard in the reservation 'without prejudice to our existing treaties with Arab chiefs'. It is submitted that it should be made clear to Hussein that we recognise the desirability of reassuring him once more that our policy of 'recognising and supporting the independence of the Arabs' is unchanged. This very independence is a negation of any policy of subjecting one independent ruler to the suzerainty of another without his consent. Our present information tends to show that the Arab independence on which Hussein himself has always laid such stress, and which we ourselves have always regarded with the utmost sympathy, is at present rather a local than a national aspiration. His relations with his immediate neighbours do not encourage us to form the opinion that either Ibn Saud or the Idrisi are at present prepared to recognise his suzerainty. Here again the argument would be greatly strengthened if we could assure Hussein that in the event of any or all of the independent rulers of Arabia electing to recognise the overlordship of the Hedjaz, or to enter into close political or other relations with it, His Majesty's Government would not only offer no objection, but would co-operate in every way. In any case our 'Arabian Chapter'¹¹ as finally approved by the Eastern Committee, and possibly the Cabinet, should be fully explained to him in vindication of our contention; and if he could be induced to signify his concurrence in it our hands would be greatly strengthened *vis-à-vis* the other Principal Allied Powers.

15. It has been suggested in paragraph 8 above that the prospect of a permanent treaty being entered into between His Majesty's Government and the Hedjaz itself is a factor which may have a considerable effect in inducing Hussein to accept the various arguments outlined in the preceding paragraphs. Before discussing the purely local questions with which such a permanent treaty might deal, it is desirable to consider the channel through which all these conversations should be conducted.

It has been shown that Hussein is in a frame of mind which is by no means favourable to the opening of conversations directed principally towards obtaining his acquiescence in the principles of the Turkish Peace Treaty. Neither the arguments suggested above nor the prospect of a permanent treaty are likely to attract him in his present mood. It is essential to secure the whole-hearted co-operation of Feisal, and the selection of a suitable British negotiator is of the first importance. It is submitted that the conversations should in the first place be of the nature of informal discussions, paving the way to the eventual employment of the recognised diplomatic procedure. Feisal should first be approached informally and sounded as to

¹¹ Cf. No. 330.

his own views and his prospects of inducing his father to accept them. When he is convinced, he can go to Jeddah and attempt to convince his father.

16. Before broaching the question of a treaty to King Hussein and proposing that it should be included in the preliminary conversations between a negotiator appointed by His Majesty's Government on the one hand and the Emir Feisal on behalf of his father on the other, it is necessary to consider what benefits His Majesty's Government desire to obtain by such a treaty and what advantages they are in a position or are prepared to offer.

In the following proposals it has been assumed:—

- (a) That King Hussein will have ratified the Treaty of Versailles and will have signed and ratified the Treaty of Sèvres or agreed to carry out all these actions.
- (b) That the proposed treaty will be confined to questions of a local character which are of mutual interest to His Majesty's Government and the Hedjaz and which do not infringe in any way on the rights and privileges of the other Allied Powers.
- (c) That it will therefore take no account of the wide claims of King Hussein to speak on behalf of all the Arab peoples nor of any promises concerning the Arab peoples in general made by His Majesty's Government to him as spokesman.
- (d) That it will not include any of the matters settled by either the Treaty of Versailles or the Treaty of Sèvres, both on the ground that such inclusion would be unnecessary and because His Majesty's Government is not free to take any action in their regard except in conjunction with the Principal Allied Powers.

The matters in question are:—

Treaty of Versailles: Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. (This is also included in the Treaty of Sèvres.)

Treaty of Sèvres: Articles 98, 99, 100, 367, 428.

These articles will be found in Appendix C.¹²

It might, however, be advisable to refer to the two treaties in the preamble of the proposed treaty, pointing out the privileges and obligations contained therein. The preamble might also state that the object of the treaty was to confirm and strengthen the close ties of friendship which exist between His Majesty's Government and the Government of the Hedjaz: to promote amity and peace between the independent rulers of Arabia who are in treaty relations with His Majesty's Government: and to come to an agreement on certain matters of mutual interest and benefit.

As regards the questions with which the treaty should deal, the main desiderata of His Majesty's Government appear to be as follows:—

(1) The protection of the rights and interests and of the persons of British subjects in the Hedjaz, in view of the fact that the Capitulations will disappear on the ratification of the Treaty of Sèvres. Whether this should take

¹² Not printed.

the form of an insistence on the rights of ex-territoriality on the lines of the treaty with the Sultan of Muscat and Oman in 1891 (Aitchison's *Treaties* pp. 237-8)¹³ or of a series of special provisions designed to meet present and future conditions in the Hedjaz is a matter for legal opinion. The proposal is, in any case, likely to meet with opposition from King Hussein who, as early as the 14th July, 1915, in his message to Mr. Storrs, laid down the abolition of the Capitulations as one of his fundamental requirements, and who has recently shown a disposition to take some decisive action in this regard. His Majesty's Government have at no time expressed any opinion to King Hussein on this matter, but the mediæval form of government which exists in the Hedjaz evidently renders it essential that some form of protection should be devised in favour of the many thousands of British subjects who live in or visit that country.

(2) That King Hussein should recognise and respect our existing treaties with those Arab rulers whose boundaries march with the boundaries of the Hedjaz; and that he should undertake to refrain from all aggression against or interference with such rulers, and to accept the arbitration of His Majesty's Government both as regards boundaries and also as regards other questions in dispute which are likely to lead to a breach of friendly relations, provided that the other ruler or rulers agree.

The question of our treaties with Arab chiefs was raised in the correspondence which preceded the Arab revolt, Sir Henry McMahon writing on the 24th October, 1915, that the acceptance, as qualified, of the boundaries proposed by the Shereef was 'without prejudice to our existing treaties with Arab chiefs'. The King, in his letter of the 5th November, 1915,¹⁴ referring only to the provinces of Irak, agreed to respect our 'agreements with the sheikhs of those districts and especially those which are essential'. In consequence of this, Sir Henry McMahon, on the 13th [14th] December, 1915,¹⁵ wrote: 'In stating that the Arabs are ready to recognise and respect all our treaties with Arab chiefs, it is, of course, understood that this will apply to all territories included in the Arab Kingdom as the Government of Great Britain cannot repudiate engagements which already exist.' (The phrase 'Arab Kingdom' was unfortunate, and its employment will make it difficult for any great stress to be laid upon this passage in the original correspondence.) To this the King made no reply, but in the 'agreement' which he alleges was made with His Majesty's Government (see Appendix A), and to which he alluded so recently as the 17th October, 1920, he laid down: 'The Arab Government will undertake to respect the agreements and contracts which the British Government makes with any Arab or individual Emir who happens to be within these boundaries, namely, that she (i.e., the Arab Government) will replace the British Government in seeing that the rights involved in those agreements and contracts are maintained for the benefit of

¹³ The reference is to Article 13 of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Muscat, signed at Muscat, March 19, 1891, of which the text is printed in Aitchison, vol. xi, pp. 310-17.

¹⁴ No. 5 in Cmd. 5957.

¹⁵ No. 6 in Cmd. 5957.

those who are entitled to them.' His Majesty's Government evidently cannot accept a formula of this nature.

(3) The acceptance of the presence of a British consul and agent at Jeddah.

(4) The acceptance of the presence of a British Mohammedan representative at Mecca, should His Majesty's Government at any time consider the appointment desirable in the interests of their pilgrims.

In return for these concessions His Majesty's Government might be prepared to—

- (i) Use their influence to promote friendly relations between King Hussein and the other rulers and governments of Arabia, and co-operate fully in the event of any or all of the rulers of Arabia outside the mandated areas deciding to recognise him as their overlord or to conclude treaties with him.
- (ii) Recognise and respect the sacred and unique office of the Shereef of Mecca and guarantee the independence, rights and privileges of the Shereefate against all external foreign aggression.
- (iii) Provide or guarantee a loan to be secured on the customs or such other source of income as shall be agreed upon (this is one of the questions to be considered by the Eastern Committee at its next meeting).
- (iv) Supply the Hedjaz Government at its own cost with such arms, munitions and equipment as are considered, in consultation between the two parties, essential for the maintenance of an adequate force for the preservation of internal order. The King on his part to adhere strictly to the terms of the Arms Traffic Convention which he has already signed.
- (v) Recognise the appointment of Hedjaz consular agents in Cairo, London or other places in the British Dominions to be discussed.

The King will almost certainly press for the recognition of a diplomatic agent in London, and the request may be difficult to refuse in view of his position as an independent sovereign. It would, however, seem advisable to withhold consent at first.

- (vi) Grant the Hedjaz the right to communicate direct with the national Governments of the mandated areas of Mesopotamia and Transjordan on matters of common interest, provided that such communications were consistent with the mandatory principle, and that all conclusions were submitted to His Majesty's Government for concurrence.

H. W. Y.

APPENDIX A TO No. 342

*English translation of a letter from King Hussein to Sir R. Wingate, His Majesty's
High Commissioner, Cairo*

(In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful)

MECCA, August 28, 1918 (21 Dhu'l Qada, 1336)

Illustrious Administrator,

After offering my respects and regards to your Excellency, I have seen—especially at the present time—all the attention and repeated assurances of your Excellency in removing the causes of misunderstanding which I do not doubt are specially intended to protect the susceptibilities of your sincere friend. Therefore, considering what small matters of this kind may lead to, I thought it good to sound His Majesty's Government as to the original decisions made with her respecting the rising and its foundations in the enclosed terms of agreement. I did not ask the British Government what I did ask in the way of conditions (which His Majesty's Government pledged himself to) in the interest of the country for the purpose of establishing a Government or constituting a Power in order to monopolise its sovereignty myself, coveting the influence and headship derived therefrom, but, when Great Britain invited me as she did, and I understood that her aims were to secure the Moslem interest in general and that of the Arabs in particular, I could not but comply with her request, at least, according to those terms, which, in my opinion, amount to the following:—

1. The protection of the status of the Moslem world in view of what has befallen, and will befall, Turkey.
2. To save Great Britain from being accused of aims inconsistent with her real ones.
3. To prevent my being accused of intriguing with her in opposition to the fundamental principles of the rising.

It is true that in my meeting with Mr. Storrs in the first year at Jeddah, also in my subsequent meeting with the distinguished Sir Mark Sykes, and last year with the eminent Commander Hogarth,¹⁶ I found nothing contrary to, or departing from, the said decisions. However, the delicate nature and vital importance of our enterprise and the occurrence of circumstances demanded further explanations of the questions involved, and that further details and assurances should be given as to the fixed conditions (or boundaries) and what is implied therein; but, as regards the other terms, I feel that it is impossible for me adequately to offer thanks to your Excellency for their having been fulfilled, especially as regards the different forms of subsidies. If you were to learn that mistakes were made concerning the same in our original decisions, or rather that events dictated their being modified (or changed), this not being a matter which would affect the status of the Moslem world, notwithstanding that I think, and 'certain thoughts are wicked' (Arabic proverb), that this matter is not altogether free from it in my own opinion, which may be mistaken and wrong, and when we add to this my apparent failure in attaining the hoped-for results, there would remain no alternative for your sincere friend but to withdraw from the work and to give it up, owing to my personal conviction as to the result of the modification of our original agreement above referred to. Moreover, a departure from the original agreement, thereby exposing

¹⁶ See document No. 1 in Cmd. 5964 of 1939.

us to the dangers mentioned in the above three clauses, will blacken my page of history, will destroy and take from me the confidence and trust of my country and the people most attached to me when they see the opposite of those agreements which I have proclaimed and expressed to them, verbally and in writing, during this period, and on which I had founded many important enterprises. I should, therefore, have defrauded myself and deceived you, my friend, owing to the subsequent disturbances, revolutions, &c., in the country, which would destroy all the confidence of His Majesty's Government in me and would even deprive me of my personal benefit. My sincere loyalty compels me to say, at this moment, that the first signs that these fears may be realised are almost apparent from frequent requests from different sources manifesting a desire that the independence of the country be declared. I can only reply to them that my independence is the independence of all parts of the country, but they bring forward further arguments. Therefore, in case modification is necessary, there is no alternative for your sincere friend but to abdicate and withdraw—an action, I doubt not, but that the noble spirit of Great Britain would consider, as it is, a vital necessity and not for any trivial aim or personal interest. Her great heart will never cease to think that I and my sons are her friends, whose loyalty and friendship will never change. So name the country where she desires we should live that we may proceed to it at the first opportunity. Whether her decision [*sic*] be favourable or otherwise, we shall continue to praise and thank her; and God is a witness of this. If, however, she agrees to this, but thinks that the present state of war necessitates its being held over until the end of the war, we shall, on account of her favour and our gratitude to her, be obliged to persevere, in the face of redoubled private and public accusations, and content ourselves with a pure and clear conscience. In short, the decision, one way or the other, rests with you. As regards deferring the question until the Peace Conference, know, your Excellency, that we are not concerned with or related to it that we should await its decisions in the negative or affirmative. Were the said Conference to decide (to give us) double our original stipulations, and the decision came through any source but your hands, may we be expelled from God's mercy if we accept it. God is observing all my statements, and to Him I pray to give us all His divine protection.

Please accept, your Excellency, my sincere respects.

Yours sincerely,

HUSSEIN

(*Note.*—The word *hudud* may mean 'boundaries' or 'conditions'.)

Translation of 'The [so-called] Agreement come to with the British Government regarding the Rising and its Foundation'

1. Great Britain agrees to the formation of an Independent Arab Government in every meaning of the word 'independence' internally and externally, the boundaries of the said Government being, on the east, the Persian Gulf; on the west, the Red Sea, the Egyptian frontier, and the Mediterranean; on the north, the northern boundaries of the vilayet of Aleppo and Mosul up to the River Euphrates and its junction with the Tigris as far as their mouths in the Persian Gulf, but with the exception of the Aden colony, which is excluded from these boundaries.

The Arab Government will undertake to respect the agreements and contracts which the British Government makes with any Arab or individual Emir who happens to be within these boundaries; namely, that she will replace the British

Government in seeing that the rights involved in those agreements and contracts are maintained for the benefit of those who are entitled to them.

2. Great Britain undertakes to shield the said Government and protect it against any interference or encroachment of any kind or form whatever affecting her internally or her boundaries by land or sea; and even, in the case of an internal rising caused by enemy intrigues or the jealousy of Emirs, the British Government will give the Arab Government moral and material help in putting down the rising; this help in internal disorders and risings shall be limited to the time when the Arab Government shall have completed its material formation.

3. Basra shall be in the occupation of the British Government until the said new Arab Government shall have completed its material formation as above mentioned. A sum of money shall be allotted by the British Government, in assessing which the requirements of the Arab Government will be taken into consideration, seeing that the said Government is like a minor in the keeping of the British Government, and the sum referred to will be a gift made in respect of the said occupation.

4. Great Britain undertakes to supply her foster-daughter, the Arab Government, with all its requisitions of arms, ammunition, war materials, and money, in the way of subsidies, for the duration of the war.

5. Great Britain undertakes to cut the railway line at Marsin or any other convenient spot in that area.

No. 343

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

*No. 410 [E 14579/13556/44]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 30, 1920*

Sir,

With reference to your telegrams Nos. 317, 321 and 351 of the 17th and 26th October and the 4th November respectively,¹ I transmit the accompanying copy of correspondence with the War Office relative to the proposed despatch of troops to Transjordan.²

2. It has no doubt occurred to you that the original representations of M. de Caix are of far more than local importance, raising as they do the whole question of the possible conflict between the French and British ideas of a mandate, not only in the Palestine area but also in Mesopotamia, where it is anticipated that similar representations may be made by the French in the future. His Majesty's Government are anxious to reduce their military commitments in both areas, and while fully recognising that their claim to political control over the regions in which they have accepted a mandate is inseparable from the responsibility for preventing that region from becoming a trouble to the peace of neighbouring areas, they see no necessity for framing their own policy in conformity with that which commends itself to the French Government. The original decision of His Majesty's Government to send no

¹ These telegrams are not printed. For M. de Caix's views, as reported by Sir H. Samuel on Oct. 12, see No. 326.

² These letters and telegrams are not printed.

troops across the Jordan, and to limit British penetration to the appointment of a minimum number of specially selected political officers, was dictated not only, or even mainly, by military consideration, but by the consideration that the presence of troops in that area would be regarded as provocative, and that some action on the part of officers or men of the garrison who could not be expected in every case to possess special discretion, might result in local disturbances, and, consequently, might commit His Majesty's Government to a much more extended occupation.

3. I fully appreciate the difficulties outlined in your telegram No. 317, especially in the initial stages, but I am confident that the despatch of political officers will be successful in establishing satisfactory conditions in Transjordan without military support, provided that they do not attempt to move too fast.

4. In the event of M. de Caix or the local French representatives raising the question again you should point out that His Majesty's Government are not prepared to consider the transference of troops to this area unless and until trouble really arises, which they see no reason to anticipate. In any future conversations or correspondence with such French representatives you should bear in mind that, while determined to accept responsibility for Transjordan to the extent of advising and assisting the native elements, and, if necessary, taking military action in special cases to obviate the possibility of justifiable complaints on the part of neighbouring countries, His Majesty's Government neither wish nor intend to take so direct a responsibility for its administration and internal security as the French Government appear to contemplate in the corresponding area of their mandatory territory in Syria.

5. You should communicate the general tenor of this despatch to the political officers at present employed in Transjordan, if you see no objection. I should be glad if you would consider at the same [time]³ the advisability of centralising the administration in Transjordan to the extent of formally appointing the senior officer of those in Transjordan as the channel of communication between yourself and the remainder. It appears possible that this step may be advantageous in securing co-ordination of British policy in Transjordan, and paving the way to uniformity of administrative measures, so far as this is consistent with the wishes of the inhabitants.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

³ This word was in the draft of the despatch.

No. 344

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received December 4, 10 a.m.)

No. 406 Telegraphic [E 15192/13556/44]

Urgent

JERUSALEM, December 3, 1920, 2.45 p.m.

Propose issuing notice to Trans-Jordan of which following is the summary.

Begins. Reports now current in Trans-Jordania that Arab Army is advancing North against French and that movement has British approval is [*sic*] false. If such movement did take place, His Majesty's Government would neither countenance nor support and would disapprove of local participation. Ends.

Do you approve?¹

Notice would have salutary effect locally and on French.

¹ Foreign Office telegram No. 285 of Dec. 7 (not printed) expressed approval but suggested that 'second paragraph might be put more strongly. We suggest as alternative wording "Any such movement would on the contrary be strongly condemned by His Majesty's Govt"'. It added, 'We are informing French Government of action taken'. For a reference to the notices actually posted, see P. P. Graves (ed.), *Memoirs of King Abdullah of Transjordan* (London, 1950), p. 194.

No. 345

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received December 28)

No. 181 [E 16186/85/44]

JERUSALEM, December 6, 1920

My Lord,

The two telegrams from Mr. Fontana¹ at Beyrout of December 3rd, repeated to me under Nos. 21 and 111,² reporting observations made by M. de Caix in conversation, make it desirable that I should review for Your Lordship's information the various steps which I have taken in connection with the relations between this Administration and the French Authorities in Syria.

1. In August last, after the occupation of Damascus by the French, and at the time when they were seriously threatened with an attack from the Hauran, I received representations from that District seeking some expression of British support. Without any request having reached me from the French Authorities I sent the reply to the Sheikhs who had approached me that the British Government could not intervene in the affairs of the Districts in Trans-Jordania North of the Sykes-Picot Line, and that I could receive no deputations from there.

On August 14th I communicated the step which I had taken to M. Rais, the French Consul-General in Jerusalem, who expressed himself much gratified at this friendly action. I informed him also of the course that I proposed to adopt with regard to the establishment of British influence South of the Line. I subsequently received a letter from him dated August 23rd in which he stated that General Gouraud saw no objection to the steps I was about to take and provisionally agreed that the boundary should be the Sykes-Picot Line until the final settlement of the frontiers.

I was subsequently informed that General Toulet had made a speech in

¹ H.M. Acting Consul-General at Beirut.

² These Beirut telegrams, Nos. 111 of Dec. 2 and 113 of Dec. 3 to the Foreign Office, are not printed.

Damascus, on behalf of General Gouraud, which was circulated in a special edition of an Arabic newspaper, quoting the declaration that I had made with reference to the Hauran, but adding, with regard to the Territory to the South of the Sykes-Picot Line, that the matter remained undetermined. As this was likely to confuse the minds of the people in Trans-Jordania I drew the attention of the French Authorities to this statement, which was not in accordance with General Gouraud's previous declaration, and asked that they would be good enough to communicate with me on the subject. Beyond an acknowledgment from M. Rais I have had no reply to this representation. M. Rais, however, rendered me considerable assistance in writing to the officials of the Damascus Government stationed in Trans-Jordania requesting them to acknowledge British influence until the boundaries were finally fixed.

2. When the Emir Feisul was at Haifa with a number of his followers, M. Rais asked whether one of them—Adel Arslan—would be surrendered and brought to trial. I pointed out the disadvantage of this course both to the French and to this Government, and the matter was not pressed.

3. The next incident related to Ali Khulqui, the Kaimakam of Irbid, which was raised by M. de Caix on the occasion of his visit to Jerusalem,³ together with other questions relating to the Administration of Major Somerset.

On these matters I wrote fully to General Gouraud on November 10th, and attach a copy of the letter and its enclosures.⁴ To this letter also I have had no reply.

4. In the course of M. de Caix's visit he also raised the question of the extradition of offenders whom the French Government wished to put on trial. After communication with the Foreign Office, I wrote to M. Rais on September 24th (copy attached)⁴ fully detailing the steps which this Administration proposed should be taken in such cases. This letter like the previous ones has had no reply, but M. de Caix now complains, in the conversation reported in the telegrams under reference, that I have refused delivery of persons condemned by the French for pillage and murder of French soldiers, maintaining that they were political offenders and considered as refugees from a state of war.

With the exception of the case of Adel Arslan mentioned above, I have received no request from the French authorities for the surrender of any such criminals, and have given no such reply.

5. Although the Press in Palestine enjoys full liberty and no prosecutions have taken place since my arrival in Palestine for any offence relating to the political situation in this country, I thought it right to order the prosecution of a newspaper at Haifa for writing an article inciting the people of the Hauran to rise against French government. The Editor was convicted, and was subjected to the excessive sentence of six months imprisonment. I have not previously reported this matter either to Your Lordship or to the French Authorities as the Editor is appealing, and I was awaiting the result of that appeal. At the same time, the Editor of a newspaper in Jerusalem who had published an article very derogatory to the French, though not inciting to

³ See No. 326.

⁴ Not printed.

violence, was reprimanded in my name by the District Governor, and admonished not to pursue such a course in future. In both cases my action was taken on my initiative and not at any request of the French Authorities, and I quote them as evidence of the spirit that animates this Administration in relation to its neighbour.

I am informed, however, that the Press at Damascus and Beyrout frequently contains articles of a violently anti-British tendency, including personal attacks upon myself, with respect to which apparently no action is taken. I am taking steps to have copies of such newspapers sent to me.

6. I visited some of the Sheikhs of the Belka in Trans-Jordania on November 28th, and then received definite information that the Emir Abdullah had been for some days at Ma'an, and was threatening to attack the French. I communicated this information to M. Rais on the same evening and at the same time telegraphed it to your Lordship (my telegram No. 396).⁵

M. de Caix appears now to have told Mr. Mackereth⁶ that I had informed him that 6,000 Arabs were moving North, and expressed the private opinion that the reason why the British refrained from occupying Trans-Jordania was because I preferred that the Arabs should remain free to attack the French in Syria rather than that they should take action against Palestine on anti-Zionist grounds.

I do not know how the figure of 6,000 Arabs was introduced into the matter. No such number was ever mentioned by me. The figure which I gave, on the information furnished to me, was 300 men with six machine guns.

Your Lordship is aware how entirely contrary to the truth is M. de Caix's allegation with regard to the occupation of Trans-Jordania.

There is, in any case, not the slightest danger that the Arabs of Trans-Jordania would attack Palestine on anti-Zionist grounds, and the consideration which he mentions had, of course, never entered my mind.

If it is thought worth while, the British Consul-General in Beyrout might be supplied with information as to the actual facts of the case.

7. Rumours continually reach me, both from different parts of Palestine and from Trans-Jordania, of an active French propaganda being conducted in both territories against Zionism and against the British Administration. I have not been able to verify these rumours and they have no influence upon my action, but they are widespread and persistent. This Government, of course, does not endeavour to interfere in any way in the internal affairs of the French Zone.

8. I will conclude by drawing Your Lordship's attention to the fact that on the 30th August [Sept. 1], 1920, I made the suggestion that the British Liaison Officer at Damascus should be replaced by a Consular officer,⁷ as I believed this would conduce to better relations with the French Authorities. I was informed by your telegram No. 126 of 6th September⁸ that this was intended. Again on the 24th September, 1920 (my telegram No. 272)⁸ I recommended that this step should not be further delayed. No action has,

⁵ Of Nov. 28, not printed.

⁶ H.M. Vice-Consul at Beirut.

⁷ In Jerusalem telegram No. 230, not printed.

⁸ Not printed.

however, been taken. Although I am convinced that the present Liaison Officer is capable and energetic, I am equally convinced that his withdrawal in favour of a civilian official would be of advantage.

9. This despatch is not being repeated to Beyrout, but if it is desired that this should be done, perhaps Your Lordship would be good enough to telegraph to me accordingly.

I have, &c.,
HERBERT SAMUEL

No. 346

Earl Curzon to Lord Hardinge¹ (Paris)

No. 3949 [E 15192/13556/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 8, 1920*

My Lord:—

Reports have been received by His Majesty's Government to the effect that rumours are current in Palestine and Trans-Jordania that the Emir Abdullah is contemplating hostile action against the French authorities in Syria.²

2. I have taken the opportunity of the presence in this country of the Emir Feisal to inform him, as the representative of the King of the Hejaz, that any such movement would be strongly condemned by His Majesty's Government. The Emir assured me that he would immediately communicate with King Hussein in this sense³ and I have caused the representatives of His Majesty's Government at Jeddah and Jerusalem to let it be widely known that His Majesty's Government will not countenance any action being taken by the Hejaz authorities of a nature to conflict with French interests in Syria.⁴

3. Your Excellency should take an opportunity of mentioning this to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I am, &c.,
(for the Secretary of State)
J. A. C. TILLEY

¹ Lord Hardinge had succeeded Lord Derby as H.M. Ambassador at Paris.

² See No. 344 and No. 345, para. 6.

³ In a note on the file, dated Dec. 4, Lord Curzon had written: 'Feisal in his audience with the King this afternoon gave an absolute assurance that Abdullah would cause no trouble.'

⁴ Cf. No. 344, n. 1.

Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem) to Earl Curzon (Received December 13, 11.15 a.m.)

No. 425 Telegraphic [E 15544/13556/44]

Very urgent

JERUSALEM, December 12, 1920, 7.35 p.m.

Your telegram No. 256¹ indicates your doubt of Abdullah engaging in serious activities and your telegram No. 281² mentions the possibility of restraining influences at Jeddah. Beyond above I have no means of gathering the true import of his activities and can but call your attention to their present aspect and possible outcome. Shiekh's [*sic*] of Southern Trans-Jordania Vilayet summoned to meet Abdullah at Maan³ and those of Central district to meet Shereef Mohammed Ali at Amman.

Most invitations have been accepted as Sheikhs are prepared to take no risk of offending possible future ruler of the country. At present Abdullah and Ali profess friendship for us, disclaim intention of interfering with existing régime and openly announce their purpose to be war on French in combination with Mustapha Kemal in Cilicia.

But possibility cannot be ignored that Abdullah may proclaim a Shereefian Government over Trans-Jordania and it is already widely reported in Kerak district that this is about to be done. Although I am convinced that this would be contrary to the wishes of the great majority of the inhabitants there is no probability of organised local resistance [*sic*] of such action if His Majesty's Government maintain a passive attitude. If such an event took place the consequences which I have repeatedly pointed out to His Majesty's Government must ensue. Inter-tribal disorder and recurrence of raids into Palestine together with insecurity of Palestine's chief source of food supply would threaten serious re-action here. Your despatch No. 410, paragraph 4 re-affirms His Majesty's Government's acceptance of certain conditions in Trans-Jordania⁴ and I should be remiss if I did not call attention to the seriousness of situation which may be now developing.

Repeated to Cairo, Bagdad.

¹ Of. Nov. 19, not printed.

² Of Dec. 3, not printed. This had informed Sir H. Samuel that the Emir Feisal had been told of the reports concerning the Emir Abdulla's activities and was 'understood to be telegraphing to King Hussein' to curb them.

³ For the Emir's own account of his activities at Maan and the proclamation he issued on Dec. 5 to 'all our Syrian brethren', see Graves, *Memoirs of King Abdullah*, pp. 190-4.

⁴ No. 343.

*Lord Hardinge (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received December 14)**No. 3686 [E 15586/2465/44]*

PARIS, December 12, 1920

My Lord,

I called this morning on the President of the Council and read him Your Lordship's despatch No. 3949 of December 8th¹ concerning the rumours current in Palestine and Trans-Jordania of hostile action contemplated by the Emir Abdullah against the French authorities in Syria, and a communication made to the Emir Feisal condemning any such movement together with instructions given to His Majesty's Representative[s] in Jeddah and Jerusalem to let it be widely known that His Majesty's Government would not countenance any action of that kind.

Monsieur Leygues thanked me warmly for this communication, which he said would be very useful to him since he had passed through some difficult moments with the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Chamber in replying to questions put to him regarding the presence in London of Emir Feisal and his activities and those of his brother. He had reassured them, however, by telling them that he had received assurances in London that the Emir Feisal was not recognised by His Majesty's Government as having any official status either in Syria or Mesopotamia. He asked me to give him a copy of Your Lordship's despatch, and this I am doing.

Last night I met General Gouraud and conversation with him turned entirely on the affairs of Syria. He spoke with considerable bitterness against the Emir Feisal whom he accused of treachery and of having shed the blood of French soldiers. He said that from the support given by England to Feisal it was quite clear that His Majesty's Government had no conception of Feisal's real character. He was not the hero imagined by Colonel Lawrence,² but an Arab intriguer. As an example, he stated that the Emir Feisal had had a long interview with him in which he had offered, if supplied with arms and money, to drive the English out of Palestine and Mosul. He even offered that the French should come in behind the Arab forces when they had successfully evicted our troops. He further added that there was no doubt that before recent troubles in Mesopotamia, he had given leave of absence to those members of his staff who were natives of Mesopotamia in order that they might go back and fight against us. I replied to the General that we recognised that Feisal had rendered us good service during the war with Turkey, but that we were not so ignorant of Feisal's character as he seemed to imagine, for, after all, the proposals which Feisal had made to him were nothing more than what one would expect from any Arab Chief, whose duplicity and love of intrigue and desire to profit by setting one govern-

¹ No. 346.² Col. T. E. Lawrence had during the recent war been liaison officer with, and adviser to, the Emir Feisal.

ment against another were notoriously typical of the Arab character in every respect. Nevertheless, I was of opinion that Feisal could do much less harm to the French or to us when safely in England than if he were residing in Italy or Switzerland, where he would come into contact with the Young Turk Party and Enver's emissaries.³ With this, General Gouraud interjected he entirely disagreed, for he said that the presence of Feisal was interpreted in Syria as support given to him in opposition to the French. He then asked me whether the report was true that His Majesty's Government had decided to send the Emir Feisal as King to Mesopotamia. I replied that there was no foundation whatsoever at the present time for this newspaper report.

General Gouraud struck me as being an honest, modest and straightforward man, but I should have said totally incapable of dealing with Eastern intrigues.

I have, &c.,

HARDINGE OF PENSHURST

³ Cf. No. 14, n. 2, and No. 78, n. 4.

No. 349

Earl Curzon to Major Batten¹ (Jeddah)

No. 25 Telegraphic [E 15577/13556/44]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 13, 1920, 1.15 p.m.

Following for King [Hussein] from Emir Feisal.

In my previous wire which I am afraid you have not been able to decypher I have reported my reception by His Majesty the King and the sincerity of His Majesty's feelings towards yourself. He commanded me to communicate these feelings textually to you and I therefore repeat the same. I found the King kinder than I could ever have expected. This is the best augury without any doubt for the future friendliness of our mutual relations which will henceforth be as they were in the past. His Majesty ordered me to request Your Majesty to utilise all your influence in the suppression of every hostile action on the northern frontier. I replied we had not up to this day deviated from the King's wishes in any of our actions and that I shall report his command to Your Majesty. I solicit that you should wire the King to thank him for the kindness shown me by His Majesty and His Government and to inform him that immediate steps have been taken to suppress any hostile movement.² This is very important for the eventual negotiations I may take up with the British Government. I am informed that His Majesty has graciously wired to you about my reception and no reply has yet been received.³ I am also informed that new incidents have occurred on the railway near Deraa. I am

¹ Acting British Agent at Jeddah.

² Cf. No. 346, n. 3.

³ This message from H.M. King George V was sent in Foreign Office telegram No. 15 of Dec. 4 to the British Agent at Jeddah. An acknowledgement was received at the Foreign Office on Dec. 12.

sending this wire by British Government cypher fearing otherwise mistakes may arise as in previous messages. I also solicit Your Majesty to give clear instructions to open negotiations with British Government on political affairs.

No. 350

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 302 Telegraphic [E 15544/13556/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 15, 1920, 9 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 425.¹ (Situation in Trans-Jordania.)

Hussein has told Feisal that he is impressing upon Abdullah the undesirability of anti-allied action.

You should arrange to make this known in Trans-Jordania.

¹ No. 347.

No. 351

*Mr. Montagu to Sir P. Cox (Baghdad)*¹

No. 4132 Telegraphic [E 16038/2854/44]

INDIA OFFICE, *December 16, 1920*

The whole question of subsidies for Arabian chiefs has been discussed at an Inter-Departmental meeting under presidency of Lord Curzon,² and attended by Chancellor of Exchequer and Secretary of State for India, and representatives from Foreign Office, Treasury, War Office, India Office, and Admiralty. The discussion comprised all chiefs in Arabian peninsular [*sic*], including Gulf littoral, Muscat, and Aden.

The Chancellor pointed out imperative necessity, and asked for substantial reduction in Bin Saud's subsidy, of economy in all directions.

It was decided that a memorandum should be prepared in Foreign Office on lines suggested by Chairman, giving reasoned statement of policy of His Majesty's Government in Arabia for the future on the basis of:—

- '(1) Equal participation by His Majesty's Government and Government of India in sum allotted for subsidies to Arabian chiefs.
- '(2) Adherence to Treaty obligations with chiefs.
- '(3) Provisional yearly maximum of 100,000*l.* for subsidies for all chiefs to be distributed by His Majesty's Government and Government of India in consultation.
- '(4) Participation by other Powers interested in pilgrimage in financial support to Hedjaz.'

¹ Sir Percy Cox had arrived at Baghdad on Oct. 11, 1920, to take up his appointment as H.M. High Commissioner in Mesopotamia; see No. 450 below. A copy of this telegram was sent to the Foreign Office by the India Office on Dec. 23.

² This meeting was held on Dec. 7.

This statement is now in preparation, and details will be communicated to you and Government of India for your views in due course.

With regard to proposed conference of chiefs,³ in view of inadvisability of Ibn Saud leaving Nejd at this juncture, and of possibility of preliminary conversations of informal character being opened with Faisal regarding relations between His Majesty's Government and Hedjaz, it was decided not to proceed with proposal for the present.

Repeated Viceroy.

³ In his telegram No. 2233 of Oct. 1 (not printed) Mr. Montagu had informed Lt.-Col. Sir Arnold Wilson, Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia, of a Foreign Office proposal for a conference of Arabian chiefs 'to be summoned to London during the forthcoming winter' and had instructed him to inform Sir Percy Cox.

No. 352

Earl Curzon to Lord Hardinge (Paris)

No. 1308 Telegraphic [E 15772/13556/44]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 19, 1920, 1.10 p.m.*

Please refer to Sir H. Samuel's telegram No. 431¹ (Trans-Jordania) which will have reached you in sections.²

You should inform French Government without delay of action taken by Hussein to restrain Sherifian activities,³ and also of the attitude of the inhabitants as reported by Sir H. Samuel: you should add that we are confident French Government will instruct their High Commissioner in Syria to refrain from military action in our zone unless and until he considers such action unavoidable, and that in this event we expect to be informed by the French Government through the usual diplomatic channels. The whole question of the extent to which our respective High Commissioners shall be authorised to communicate with each other direct will form the subject of an early communication to the French Government. Please inform them of this, and also of the instructions conveyed to Sir H. Samuel in my telegram No. 297 which is being sent to you by bag.⁴

¹ Of Dec. 17, not printed. In this Sir H. Samuel referred to a conversation on Dec. 10 'with French Consul General', who 'said that course of operations might necessitate French force pursuing Sherifians across the frontier of British zone, but such infractions would be slight and temporary'. He added that 'Ali Ibn Hussein, who is not son of King of the Hedjaz, has been in charge of Sherifian movement at Amman' and that he himself had been on the point of assenting to Ali's expulsion from Amman by the local defence force, who 'were eager and able' to drive him out, 'when news arrived from Amman of instructions received by Ali from Hedjaz through Abdullah restraining his activities'.

² i.e. the selections of current Foreign Office correspondence circulated confidentially to H.M. Representatives abroad.

³ Cf. No. 350.

⁴ Only a summary of this telegram of Dec. 13 has been traced in Foreign Office archives. It instructed Sir H. Samuel 'to treat the French Consul General at Jerusalem merely as a Consular Officer with whom he could hold direct communication on matters of fact when time was of importance, and laid down that all questions of policy should be discussed between the two Governments'. Lord Hardinge accordingly addressed a note dated Dec. 20

Confidential. We are, on our part, contemplating action by friendly tribes possibly supported by aircraft against a village in the French sphere on the boundary of Mesopotamia which is a centre of Turkish activity, so that we are not in a position to protest against contemplated French action in Trans-Jordanian should necessity arise.

Repeated to Jerusalem No. 310 and Jeddah No. 31.

to M. Leygues, a copy of which he transmitted to Lord Curzon under cover of his despatch No. 3770 of the same date, not printed.

No. 353

*Letter from Earl Curzon to Lord Hardinge (Paris)*¹

[E 15586/2465/44]

Private

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 20, 1920

I am rather concerned at the possible effect which may have been produced in Gouraud's mind by the remarks which you made to him in the course of the conversation reported in your despatch of the 12th. December.² I do not personally believe that Feisal, even at a time when he may have felt that we were abandoning him, could ever have offered to co-operate with the French in driving us out of Mosul and Palestine. I daresay General Gouraud honestly believes him to have done so, but I am told that the former knows no Arabic, and that his conversations with Feisal were conducted through a French interpreter of the name of Mercier. This man was originally selected as French liaison officer with Feisal at Damascus. . . .³ In spite of all the efforts of our own liaison officers, who did their utmost to make peace between Mercier and Feisal . . .³ he entirely failed to make himself pleasant, and it was largely due to his incapacity that Feisal retained his dislike for and suspicion of the French, long after any foundation there may have been for allegations brought against our liaison officers was removed.

We have always hitherto contended that the French were mistaken in imputing to Feisal a desire to play us off against them. Feisal himself warned us that he might eventually be forced into acquiescing in an extension of his claim to the British sphere in Palestine, but that he should ever have gone so far as Gouraud alleges is I think most unlikely. As we know, he was forced by pressure of public opinion in Syria to identify us with the French in his propaganda for complete independence, but this was in order to get rid of them from Syria, not to introduce them into Palestine and Mosul. Even if he went so far as to urge that both British and French mandates should be cancelled, neither he nor his party ever contemplated siding with the French against us.

I should think it very unfortunate if at this moment above all others, when he is actually in London, the French were to get the impression that we regard him as a potential intriguer who is aiming at driving a wedge into Anglo-French friendship.

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

¹ The formal beginning and ending are missing on the filed copy.

² No. 348.

³ A personal reference is here omitted.

Letter from Sir J. Tilley to Mr. Deedes¹ (Jerusalem)

[E 15381/4164/44]

Personal and confidential

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 21, 1920

Dear Deedes:—

We sent you by last Thursday's bag a copy of a despatch to Vansittart² showing the extent to which the French gave way about the use of the waters of the northern Jordan and Yarmuk by Palestine and enclosing copies of the English and French texts of the Convention in more or less its final form.

I am writing to you now to amplify this information somewhat in order that Sir Herbert and you may realise more or less what has passed. The question of Palestine came up at a meeting of the French and British Prime Ministers at No. 10, Downing Street on December 4th.³ Previously Vansittart, who came over specially from Paris, had written a memorandum for the Prime Minister, a copy of which I enclose.⁴ This memorandum, as you will see, took account of the suggestions in Sir Herbert's telegram No. 391 of November 27th.⁵ It was felt useless to add anything in the sense of Sir Herbert's telegram No. 392 of November 28th.⁶ as the course of the discussion at San Remo (see Vansittart's memorandum) really ruled out any return to the Meinertzhagen line. Sir Herbert's telegram No. 405 of December 2nd, suggesting a possible bargain over the Druse territory⁶ was also sent over to No. 10, Downing Street as soon as it was received and before the above meeting.

I think, in addition, Doctor Weizmann had fully explained the position from the Zionist point of view to Philip Kerr, the Prime Minister's private secretary, who was given a copy of the map showing generally Rutenburg's [*sic*] irrigation and water power schemes.⁷

We understand that at the meeting the French took the line that they had fully met the Prime Minister's plea for a Palestine with the historical frontiers stretching from Dan to Beersheba by conceding the Safed, Huleh, Metullah and Baniyas (Dan) strip of territory and that, for the rest, provided the needs of Syrian territory were first met, they were quite ready to share in a liberal spirit with Palestine the rest of the waters of the Upper Jordan and Yarmuk and their tributaries. As our case for extended Palestine frontiers had always been argued at the Supreme Council generally on the 'historical' ground and in particular (however unfortunate it may now seem) on the basis of plate No. 34 ('Palestine under David and Solomon') of Adam Smith's *Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, you will readily understand how difficult it was to meet the French argument as regards the inclusion in Palestine of territory east of the Jordan and north of the Yarmuk. It would not have been so difficult, if the above plate be taken as the test, to argue for

¹ See No. 305, n. 4; also Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs*, p. 156.² No. 177 of Dec. 11 (not printed), despatched on Dec. 16.³ See Vol. VIII, No. 101.⁴ This memorandum of Nov. 30 is not printed.⁵ See No. 341, n. 2.⁶ Not printed.⁷ See No. 331, n. 3.

a frontier including part of the Litani but, as I have said, the course of the discussion at San Remo practically excluded that point being again taken up. In the end it was decided that the French offer as to sharing the surplus waters of the northern Jordan and Yarmuk should be turned into a clause for insertion in the convention providing for an expert examination. You will have already seen the actual wording of the clause.

This decision has perhaps naturally disappointed the Zionists and in particular Weizmann has been rather troubled because the actual text of the resolution of the Conference mentioned that British, French and Zionist engineers were to undertake the examination, whereas in the corresponding clause of the convention only experts appointed by the Syrian and Palestine Administrations are mentioned. This was done because an Anglo-French Convention does not seem the proper place to put the Zionist Organisation on the same footing as the two mandatories.⁸ In practice it seems to make no difference whatever, because Sir Herbert will doubtless appoint Rutenberg among the other experts. Weizmann's point of view, which is quite intelligible, was, however, that it gave him something to show his followers and was, in a certain limited extent, a recognition of their efforts in the direction of more extended frontiers and more water for Palestine.

I think the above gives a more or less connected account of what has happened. We must only hope that some practical and satisfactory arrangement can be reached with the French when it comes to the expert discussion.⁹

J. A. C. TILLEY

⁸ In a letter of Dec. 22 (not printed) Lord Curzon assured Dr. Weizmann that 'the omission of any specific mention of Zionist engineers in the article agreed upon with the French is not intended in any way as a modification of the resolution in question' and that it was 'to be expected that among the experts appointed, the Palestine administration will wish to include Zionist engineers nominated by your Organisation'.

⁹ The formal ending of this letter is missing on the filed copy.

No. 355

Lord Hardinge (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received December 23, 5 p.m.)

No. 1410 Telegraphic [E 16035/4164/44]

PARIS, December 23, 1920, 2 p.m.

Your despatch No. 3984 December 11th.¹

I signed Convention this morning.

French propose to give text to Press to-morrow and to publish explanatory notes at same time. They presume you will do the same.²

¹ Not printed.

² For postponement of the date of publication see No. 359 below. The Convention was published as Cmd. 1195 of 1921 on March 17 and is also printed in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 113, pp. 355-60.

No. 356

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

No. 324 Telegraphic [E 16107/13556/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 23, 1920, 11 p.m.*

Feisal has been instructed by Hussein to discuss matters of mutual interest to His Majesty's Government and the Hejaz and conversations are now proceeding on the basis that the mandatory principle, which has been approved by the principal Allied powers, is not open to discussion, and that the question of Syria shall not be broached by either party. In the event of Feisal raising the question of Trans-Jordania, I propose to explain to him

- (a) that we regard Trans-Jordania as being under our Mandate:
- (b) that we are helping the people to set up a native administration:
- (c) that we are prepared to discuss with Hussein the frontier between the Hejaz and Trans-Jordania:
- (d) that all other matters, including delimitation of the frontier between Palestine and Trans-Jordania, are matters for His Majesty's Government to decide in consultation with the inhabitants:
- (e) that due regard will be paid to the wishes of the properly constituted local authorities regarding their future form of Government.

Please telegraph urgently if you see any objection to either of these suggestions.¹

This telegram should not be repeated to Baghdad pending further instructions.

Repeated to Jeddah No. 32 and Cairo No. 1037.

¹ In his telegram No. 451 of Dec. 26 (not printed) Sir H. Samuel concurred in all the suggestions 'assuming that criticism of . . . [text here uncertain] future form of government refers to question of internal government. In that connection no doubt you will bear in mind possibility of political agitation in Trans-Jordania inspired from Hedjaz as illustrated by recent movement of Abdulla.'

No. 357

Note from Earl Curzon to the French Chargé d'Affaires

[E 16027/9/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 23, 1920*

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that his Highness the Emir Feisal has been instructed by the King of the Hedjaz to discuss matters of mutual interest between His Majesty's Government and the Hedjaz, and that these discussions are now proceeding.

2. I beg that you will inform the French Government that in the conversations with the Emir I shall proceed, as I had the honour to inform M. Cambon some weeks ago,¹ on the basis that the mandatory principle,

¹ See No. 339 above.

which has been approved by the principal Allied Powers, is not open to discussion, and that the question of Syria shall not be broached by either party.

I have, &c.,
CURZON OF KEDLESTON

No. 358

Report of a conversation between Sir J. Tilley, representing the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and His Highness the Emir Feisal, representing the King of the Hedjaz.—(Held at the Foreign Office on December 23, 1920)

[E 16103/9/44]*¹

Present :

Sir J. Tilley, K.C.M.G., C.B.

Major H. W. Young, D.S.O.

Colonel K. Cornwallis, C.B.E., D.S.O.²

His Highness the Emir Feisal.

Brigadier-General Haddad Pasha.

Rustum Haidar.³

SIR JOHN TILLEY welcomed the Emir on behalf of the Secretary of State, and explained that Lord Curzon regarded the present moment as suitable for the discussion of matters of common interest to His Majesty's Government and the King of the Hedjaz. As a result of the war with Turkey, in which the Principal Allied Powers, helped by the Hedjaz armies, had been victorious, there were many problems of reconstruction awaiting solution in the East. Among these was the establishment of permanent relations between His Majesty's Government and the Hedjaz. He alluded to the difficulty of keeping close touch even with representatives of His Majesty's Government in foreign countries owing to the impossibility of explaining a point of view satisfactorily by correspondence. From certain telegrams which had been received recently from the Hedjaz the Foreign Office had come to the conclusion that the point of view of His Majesty's Government was perhaps misunderstood by King Hussein. It was with the object of removing these misunderstandings that the Secretary of State had directed him to take the opportunity of the presence of the Emir Feisal in London to open these conversations. He wished to assure his Highness that any misconception which might have arisen was entirely due to the difficulty of communications, and that the friendly feeling of His Majesty's Government towards the Arabs was unchanged.

THE EMIR readily accepted this assurance, and requested Sir John Tilley

¹ The copy of this report signed by the Emir Feisal, and identical with the document here printed, is preserved in this file.

² Former Director of the Arab Bureau at Cairo (closed on Oct. 1, 1920), seconded temporarily by the Egyptian Government to the Foreign Office to assist in work previously done by the Bureau.

³ Former representative of King Hussein at the Peace Conference in Paris, recalled in July 1920 as a protest against the French action in Syria which led to the expulsion of the Emir Feisal.

to inform the Secretary of State that King Hussein had authorised him to say that for his part he fully reciprocated the friendly feelings of His Majesty's Government. The Emir himself was entirely at the disposal of His Majesty's Government.

SIR JOHN TILLEY then mentioned some of the points which Lord Curzon considered might profitably be discussed. Among these were the relations between King Hussein and other Arab rulers, the position of British subjects in the Hedjaz and the replacement by direct agreement between His Majesty's Government and the Hedjaz of such local arrangements as had before the war formed the subject of treaties or conventions between His Majesty's Government and the Turkish Government.

THE EMIR recognised the importance of these points, and regarded the fact that discussion of them had been suggested as a proof of the sincerity of His Majesty's Government. He wished, however, to make his own position and that of the King of the Hedjaz perfectly clear before entering upon any detailed discussion. For himself, he assured Sir John that his loyalty to, and friendship for, His Majesty's Government were unchanged. He had always been trusted by Field-Marshal Lord Allenby at a time when he was privileged to serve under his command, as some of those present could testify. He had no intention of demanding impossibilities, or of embarrassing His Majesty's Government by making requests which he well knew they could not entertain. He asked that Lord Curzon might be reminded of the position of King Hussein in the eyes of the Moslem world. When Turkey entered the war against the Allies, the Sultan, in his capacity of Caliph, had proclaimed a holy war. Relying upon certain engagements entered into with him by His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo, King Hussein had raised the standard of revolt against the Caliph of Islam, and had proclaimed to the Moslem world that certain results would follow from his action. He had done this because he honestly believed that Arab interests were British interests, and British Arab. He was not ungrateful for the support and assistance of His Majesty's Government, and had not wavered in his loyalty to them. But he felt that he was called upon, now that the war was over, to explain to the Moslem world that the assurances given to him were being fulfilled.

SIR JOHN TILLEY said that His Majesty's Government fully realised the position. They had given certain promises and were now fulfilling them. For example, they were setting up an Arab Government in Mesopotamia. The Arabs had been freed from Turkish domination, and King Hussein could tell the Moslem world that their independence was assured.

THE EMIR replied that something more than this was needed. King Hussein had no official knowledge of the intentions or policy of His Majesty's Government in certain Arab provinces.

SIR JOHN TILLEY explained that the Principal Allied Powers had decided upon the future of the districts freed from Turkish domination, and had embodied provisions to give effect to their policy in a Treaty of Peace. King Hussein had been invited to associate himself with this treaty, of which he knew the terms, and which he would presumably sign.

THE EMIR said that King Hussein did not and would not accept this treaty until he knew officially that, so far as His Majesty's Government were free to act, they proposed to fulfil the pledges which had brought him into the war on the side of the Allies.

There were in his possession certain Arabic documents signed by His Majesty's High Commissioner, Cairo, in which the latter had undertaken, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to recognise an Arab kingdom.⁴ He did not ask for impossibilities, but he had been told by Lord Curzon in 1919 that the pledges given to King Hussein by His Majesty's Government were regarded as equally binding with their engagements to other Powers,⁵ and he wished to know what steps were being taken towards the establishment of the Arab kingdom.

SIR JOHN TILLEY said that what had been promised was that His Majesty's Government were prepared, subject to certain reservations, to recognise and support the 'independence of the Arabs,' not an 'Arab kingdom.'

THE EMIR maintained that the phrase 'Arab kingdom' had been used by Sir H. McMahon, but he disclaimed any intention of insisting on textual interpretations of one passage or another in the correspondence. This was an attitude which he would prefer not to adopt. He was prepared to examine and to accept, as a friend, the general spirit of the British undertakings, and he asked that he might be given an opportunity of going through the letters with Sir John Tilley.

In order that there might be no doubt as to the text of these letters, he undertook to bring his copies to the Foreign Office on the following day, and to compare them with the Foreign Office records.⁶

⁴ Cf. No. 342, § 16.

⁵ See Vol. IV, enclosure in No. 283.

⁶ In a minute, dated Dec. 25, Major Young wrote that 'an examination of the Arabic texts of the MacMahon [*sic*] letters disclosed a mistranslation which is clearly responsible for a great deal of the atmosphere of suspicion with which King Hussein now regards us. . . . The English [of a passage in Sir H. McMahon's letter of the 24th Oct. 1915, see Cmd. 5957 of 1939, No. 4] shows clearly that H.M.G. contemplated that even in the restricted territory which lies within the boundaries as modified in the preceding paragraph [the references appear to be to the passages in n. 9 on p. 8 of Cmd. 5957], there were certain areas in which Great Britain was not free to act without detriment to French interests.

'But the Arabic version, literally translated, runs:—

"we accept those limits and boundaries, and in regard to the areas (or provinces) which those boundaries enclose, where (or whereas) Great Britain is free to act without affecting the interests (or policy) of her ally France, I am empowered etc.,"

'The effect of this careless translation is that Hussein and Feisal have always thought that Great Britain was free to act in the *whole* of the restricted area, and that the French advance on Damascus was connived in by us, in spite of our definite pledge.' Major Young added that the Arabic text of the one letter in which the 'Arab Kingdom' was mentioned (see No. 6 in Cmd. 5957) as well as the Arabic original of Sir H. McMahon's letter of Oct. 24, 1915, and of some others were missing from the Arab Bureau files recently received in the Foreign Office.

No. 359

Earl Curzon to Lord Hardinge (Paris)

No. 1319 Telegraphic [E 16035/4164/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 26, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 1410 (of December 23rd.¹ Anglo-French Convention).

We had understood that text of Convention to be signed was in fact to be sent home first before signature. In any case as we have not yet received a copy of the text, it could only be published here several days after it had appeared in Paris. We therefore telephoned to Embassy to arrange for suspension of publication until we had communicated with the French Foreign Office.

You should now point out to the French Foreign Office that we had thought until last week that mandates for Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine would be settled as a result of Geneva sittings of Council of the League of Nations.² They cannot now, however, be considered until probably the end of January and Council may then possibly take view that these mandates cannot be approved until Turkish Treaty enters into force. Article 9 of Convention however actually refers to articles in the mandates and awkward questions might be raised in Parliament and press, if convention containing these references were published before the mandates had been approved or published.

Secondly, Italian Government have protested to both French Government and His Majesty's Government that they do not accept conferment of mandates at San Remo as definitive pending entry into force of the Turkish treaty and, with it, of the Tripartite agreement regarding Anatolia.³ They apparently base their attitude on a reservation recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Supreme Council at San Remo when mandates were conferred.⁴ We are making separate communication to French Government on this point through French Embassy here who have raised question,⁵ and Italian Chargé d'Affaires has already been informed verbally that we cannot accept Italian attitude. But until this aspect of the matter is cleared up, it seems inadvisable to publish a convention which deals with a number of points arising from the conferment of the mandates.

Please communicate accordingly with French Minister for Foreign Affairs and suggest that publication of convention be suspended until at any rate it is clear what action Council of the League will take regarding 'A' mandates.

¹ No. 355.

² The 11th session of the Council lasted from Nov. 14 to Dec. 18. The 12th session opened in Paris on Feb. 21, 1921.

³ See No. 360 below and, for the Tripartite Agreement, No. 118.

⁴ See Vol. VIII, No. 16, minute 1.

⁵ See No. 361 below.

Note from Earl Curzon to the Italian Ambassador¹

[E 15728/4164/44]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 28, 1920

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to the Italian Ambassador and has the honour to refer to Signor Preziosi's interview with the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on the 18th December regarding the mandates over certain territories detached from Turkey by the Treaty of Peace, signed at Sèvres in August last.

In that interview Signor Preziosi read a telegram from the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs instructing him to inform Earl Curzon of Kedleston that the Italian Government were unable to recognise the right of the Council of the League of Nations to confer any mandates over former Turkish territories so long as the Treaty of Sèvres had not entered into force. The telegram contained at the same time an assurance from Count Sforza that the attitude of the Italian Government was in no sense inspired by any ill will against His Majesty's Government, and that the Italian Government did not propose to raise objections, in fact, to the activities of British officials in the zones placed under British influence by the treaty which has not yet entered into force.

As Sir Eyre Crowe pointed out to Signor Preziosi on this occasion, it is somewhat difficult to reconcile this assurance of Italian benevolence towards His Majesty's Government with a step which is calculated to cause His Majesty's Government the maximum of trouble, whilst bringing no advantage to Italy. The Italian Government on their part have, it is understood, actually ratified the Treaty of Sèvres.² They know that His Majesty's Government are anxious to obtain Turkish ratification, which, whilst it would establish a formal basis on which to proclaim a state of peace, would not in practice preclude such modifications of parts of the treaty as in the circumstances might prove incapable of execution. Nevertheless, the Italian Government, on the one hand, follow a policy opposed to the bringing into operation of the treaty which they have ratified, and, on the other hand, declare that, because the treaty has not been ratified by the other principal Allied Powers, no mandates are to be put into operation. They wish His Majesty's Government at the same time to believe that this procedure is neither unfriendly nor inconsiderate.

It is not easy for His Majesty's Government to regard the matter in the same light. Rightly or wrongly, they have accepted the responsibilities conferred upon them by the principal Allied Powers for the administration of the mandated territories in Mesopotamia and Palestine. This administration is involving them in the loss of numerous gallant troops, the expenditure of

¹ The draft of this note was addressed to Signor Preziosi, Italian Chargé d'Affaires.

² A minute by Sir Eyre Crowe, dated Dec. 31, reads: 'Marquis Imperiali informed me today under express instructions from Count Sforza that it was not true that Italy had ratified the treaty of Sèvres.'

large sums of money and the burden of perpetual anxieties. The one hope of His Majesty's Government is that their position in these territories may be definitely legalised without delay, so that administration and finance can at last be placed on a proper footing and order maintained in the name of duly constituted authority. They are accordingly most anxious to secure the definite issue of the mandates. At the eleventh hour, however, the Italian Government intervene and, on the strength of what appears at the most to be a purely technical point, insist on making the position of His Majesty's Government definitely irregular.

In these circumstances, Lord Curzon wishes to repeat the earnest hope already expressed by Sir Eyre Crowe that on reconsidering the position, the Italian Government will withdraw their declaration, and he would be glad if the Marquis Imperiali would convey this expression of his views at an early date to Count Sforza.

No. 361

Note from Earl Curzon to the French Chargé d'Affaires

[E 15998/4164/44]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 31, 1920*

Sir,

In reply to the memorandum which you communicated to this Office on the 21st December regarding the attitude of the Italian Government towards the conferment of the mandates for Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia,¹ I have the honour to transmit the accompanying copy of a note to the Italian Chargé d'Affaires in reply to his representations.²

2. I would draw attention to the fact that at the morning meeting of the Supreme Council at San Remo on the 25th April, at which the decision to confer the above mandates was taken, the Italian Government entered the following formal reservation, which appears in the minutes:—³

'La délégation italienne, en considération des grands intérêts économiques que l'Italie en tant que Puissance exclusivement méditerranéenne possède en Asie Mineure, réserve son approbation à la présente résolution jusqu'au règlement des intérêts italiens en Turquie d'Asie.'

3. Although the Italian Government did not refer to this reservation in their representations, they may yet do so ultimately, and they may then say that they are only prepared formally to withdraw the reservation when the Turkish Treaty, and with it the Tripartite Agreement to which the reservation presumably referred, actually enter into force. I should be grateful for an expression of the views of the French Government as to how such an

¹ Not printed. This memorandum had communicated the declaration that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs had received from Count Sforza concerning the Italian Government's attitude and had enquired what significance Lord Curzon attached to the declaration.

² See No. 360.

³ See Vol. VIII, No. 16, minute 1.

argument, if and when put forward by the Italian Government, should be met.

4. It is perhaps hardly necessary for me to add that the impression alleged to have been gained by the Italian representatives during the recent Allied conferences in London,⁴ as to an inclination on the part of His Majesty's Government to reconsider the allocation of mandates in Asia Minor, is completely erroneous.

I have, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

⁴ The reference is to meetings of the Second Conference of London, Nov. 26-Dec. 4; see Vol. VIII, Nos. 97-100.

No. 362

Earl Curzon to Sir H. Samuel (Jerusalem)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [Confidential/General/363/19]

Private and confidential

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 7, 1921, 3 p.m.*

At a recent Meeting of the Cabinet it was decided after a sharp division of opinion to hand over administration of Mandated territories in Middle East i.e. Mesopotamia and Palestine, to Colonial Office, leaving other areas in Middle East to Departments at present responsible for them. A Committee is being appointed to undertake difficult task of constructing new arrangement. I shall be glad to hear any observations that you may desire to send by telegraph on these proposals.¹

¹ Sir H. Samuel's private telegram in reply, despatched on Jan. 11, 1921, is not printed.

CHAPTER III

Persia

January 6, 1920—March 31, 1921

No. 363

Sir P. Cox¹ (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 10, 10 a.m.)

No. 8 Telegraphic [169816/150/34]

TEHRAN, *January 6, 1920, 11 a.m.*

Prime Minister has expressed to me the following views regarding pending (? commission) for the (? revision) of tariff.²

Foreign Legations evince good deal of curiosity and apprehension in regard thereto and he fears that if character of Commission is too formal, and revision a purely Anglo-Persian . . .³ (? one) other Powers will attack it. He recommends that party of British Representatives selected for the revision be regarded rather as an advisory Committee to Persian Government and that scheme of revision when decided on between our two Governments should be announced as an act of the Persian Government which 'in view of altered (? conditions) has decided to modify severe tariff as follows'.

There is some force in above, and I (? should be) (? glad to) (? know) how (? His Majesty's Government) regard proposal.

Repeated to India.

¹ H.M. Acting Minister at Tehran.

² For previous references to Article 6 of the Anglo-Persian Agreement of Aug. 9, 1919, whereby the two Governments agreed 'to the appointment forthwith of a joint Committee of experts for the examination and revision of the existing Customs Tariff', see Vol. IV, Nos. 791, 857, and 863.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'Anglo-Persian one other Powers will attack it.'

No. 364

Memorandum on Central Asia by Mr. E. W. Birse¹

[171634/171634/38]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 6, 1920*

The Russian possessions in Central Asia consisted of the districts of Transcaspia, Sirdaria, Ferghana and Semirechensk. In addition, a protectorate had been established over the Khanates of Bokhara and Khiva.

¹ A member of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office.

Turkoman tribes (Ouzbek, Tadjik, Tekin, &c.), partly sedentary and partly nomadic, numbering about two million, form the bulk of the population which includes, besides, nomadic Kirghiz tribes, European Russians (about 100,000 before the war), Bokhara Jews, Persians, Armenians and Tartars.

The Russians had interfered little with the religion and customs of the natives. In most cases the Russian settlements were situated some distance from the native towns in which the local population retained its religious institutions, colleges, native magistrates and police. On the other hand, the Russians had done practically nothing to improve education or social conditions, and the customary maladministration and corruption among officials of all classes caused them to be hated by the Turcomans, as was evidenced by serious risings during the war.

Cotton-growing and irrigation were introduced more in the interests of the textile industry of Moscow than of the local Sart, or sedentary native.

Freed from Russian domination, Transcaspia and Turkestan would prove a useful buffer State between the Persian-Afghanistan frontier and European Russia, from which they are divided by large tracts of desert and steppe, crossed by a single line of railway from Orenburg to Tashkent. They would likewise oppose an effective barrier to Russian penetration into Persia from the north-east.

The geographical position of the country—bordering as it does on Chinese Turkestan in the east, the Pamirs, Afghanistan and Persia in the south, and the new Caucasian republics across the Caspian in the west—is of considerable strategic importance, and this fact was quickly appreciated by the Bolsheviks. Though persistently, and for a time successfully, opposed by General Doutor's [*sic*]² force, they kept up the pressure in the Orenburg district until, with the final retreat of the Siberian armies, the road to Tashkent remained in their hands.

Having established themselves at Tashkent, the Bolsheviks continued to advance to the south-east, securing the cotton fields of Ferghana, and to the west, to the Oxus. Resistance was offered by local Russian forces and the despatch of a small Anglo-Indian force under General Malleon to Merv towards the end of 1918, ensured the mutual co-operation of the otherwise incompatible elements of Russians of the old régime, revolutionary Russians and Turcomans.

However, in February 1919, it was decided to withdraw the force which had secured the stemming of the Bolshevik advance, and although arms and ammunition were supplied to the Russians and the actual withdrawal to Meshed was only completed in April, their incapacity to organise or lead was proved once more. Dissension broke out in the army, the Turcomans (mostly an indolent and peaceful people) dispersed to their homes, and as a result the enemy captured during the summer Merv, Askhabad and the whole line down to Termez on the Afghan border in spite of being in dire straits for

² General Doutov, Ataman of the Orenburg Cossacks, had organized anti-Soviet forces during the first winter of the Russian revolution.

lubricants and oil fuel for the railways, and having a starving population on his hands.

The Bolsheviks are now pushing on to Krasnovodsk, the fall of which place is only a question of time.

Once they have reached the Caspian they will, no doubt, make every effort to establish close relations with the republic of Azerbaijan and the Turks with the object of securing the Baku oilfields in the first instance, but also in order to be able to attack General Denikin's rear³ and to form a coalition of Mahomedan States for the overthrow of British rule in India, Mesopotamia and Egypt.

This last is their chief aim, and in order to achieve it they may, very probably, send troops to the Afghan border and endeavour to rekindle the Afghan-Indian conflict. It is also likely that they will attack the Khorasan province of North Persia, for Afghanistan and Persia form the natural conduits for reaching India and Middle East generally.

They have given out that they intend to mass 150,000 men in Central Asia by the spring, and reports have been received of the first of these starting from Central Russia. On the borders of Persia the enemy has recently been strengthening and enlarging his frontier guard posts.

The spread of Bolshevik propaganda westward from Soviet Russia has been stemmed, at any rate to an appreciable extent, and it is now finding an outlet in the east where a vigorous propaganda campaign, making full use of the Pan-Islamic movement, is being prosecuted. Difficulty is met with in financing it, as the paper rouble has depreciated to an enormous extent and the measures adopted by the British authorities to warn the population against the Soviet currency and the prohibition of the paper rouble in India, have had a salutary effect.

The Bolsheviks are now demanding cash and food from Bokhara in exchange for their paper money, and the Amir is reported to have agreed on condition that the districts of Djizak and Samarkand are ceded to Bokhara. The Afghans claim the Merv-Kushk district as their share of the spoils. The Amir of Bokhara is forced to adopt a non-committal attitude towards the Bolsheviks at present. His people loathe them, but are not strong enough to set up an effective resistance by themselves. Still less is the smaller Khanate of Khiva able to bar the way.

The position of the Afghans is by no means clear. They have exchanged visits of delegations with Moscow, their troops are in Transcaspia, and some of their consuls are active in the Bolshevik cause. At the same time secret meetings are reported between them and the Turcomans for the purpose of arranging joint action against the Bolsheviks, and Afghan delegates have gone to Tashkent to ascertain the strength and reliability of the Mahomedans in the East. This appears to synchronise with a rising of peasants and other Moslem[s] in Ferghana, where a Provisional Government is said to have been set up. It may be doubted whether the Afghans would allow any Bolshevik troops to advance through their territory, or would seriously

³ Commander-in-Chief of the White Russian forces in South Russia.

venture on another attack on the Indian frontier. Their interference with the Bolsheviks' proceedings in the form of enforced conscription, requisitions, &c., would rather seem to point to their playing a double game.

They are, according to agents' reports, urging the Amir of Bokhara to take common action with them against the Bolsheviks. The Turcomans would, it is said, rather see their country ruled by them than leave it in the hands of the Bolsheviks.

The Persians in Transcaspia are stated to be opposed to the British in sentiment, but the Turcomans are pro-British and several tribes have offered their help if we were to take action.

Obviously, the first step should be for British naval forces to take control of the Caspian. It would be fatal to place any confidence in the Russians who are there at present. The Persians and the Yamut tribe have offered their services, but the task of guarding such a vital area should be in our own keeping. The small forces in North Persia are isolated and too weak to offer much resistance and should be strengthened or made more accessible. The Bolsheviks' most potent weapon, propaganda, should be resorted to vigorously. It has proved useful already in decrying their paper currency. It may be possible to devise means of drawing off the Afghans, or, if they are intriguing against the Bolsheviks, of utilising them.

In any case, the position in Central Asia requires careful attention and it would be well to devise some means of receiving fuller, more accurate and more reliable information as to what happens there.

A contingency not to be lost sight of, though it does not arise at present, is the possibility of Japanese expansion in Siberia. If Japanese domination becomes a serious danger and American and British supplies are withheld in consequence, the cottonfields of Ferghane [*sic*] will become vitally necessary to the Far Eastern Powers, and with that in view Japanese interest may be expected to extend to Central Asia eventually.

E. W. BIRSE

No. 365

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 12 Telegraphic [168934/165162/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 10, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 797 (of December 22nd).¹

There seems to be every probability that an Afghan Consul-General is on his way to Meshed.

You should advise the Persian Government not merely to refuse recognition but also to insist that he (and his escort if any) should withdraw till his position is regularised.

Repeat to India.

¹ Not printed.

No. 366

Mr. Lindsay¹ (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received January 14, 10.20 a.m.)

No. 26 Telegraphic [170326/150/34]

WASHINGTON, *January 13, 1920*²

A resolution was passed last month by Senate calling on State Department to communicate text of any correspondence between His Majesty's Government and United States Government with regard to Anglo-Persian Agreement.³ Substance of this correspondence has been accurately reproduced in American Press (see your telegram 672 to Teheran⁴).

I have received an unofficial message from State Department that they are being pressed to communicate the two notes exchanged and enquiring if there is any likelihood of your sending any further Note (in reply) to that from United States Ambassador of last October.⁵ If so they would (naturally) wait for it.

I should be glad to learn whether any further note is contemplated by Your Lordship and whether communication of correspondence to Senate and its publication is objected to.

¹ Counsellor in H.M. Embassy at Washington.

² The time of despatch is not recorded.

³ Senate Resolution No. 248 of Dec. 8, 1919; see *U.S. Congressional Record*, vol. 59, part i, p. 255.

⁴ Of Dec. 25, 1919; see Vol. IV, No. 876, n. 2.

⁵ See Vol. IV, No. 808. The U.S. Ambassador in London was Mr. J. W. Davis.

No. 367

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 23, 1.30 p.m.)

No. 25 Telegraphic [173052/150/34]

TEHRAN, *January 17, 1920, 5.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 10 of January 6th.¹

Prime Minister who is a good deal worried in regard to present situation and complete . . .² and military inability of Persia to repel any (? Trans-Caspian)³ Bolshevik intrusion without assistance of Great Britain or Allies saw me again on the subject yesterday. After enquiring whether I had yet received any indication of intentions of His Majesty's Government or Peace Conference in this connection he went on to urge Bolshevik menace in direction of Persia could not fairly be regarded as a purely domestic concern of Persian Government.

Bolshevik designs were directed against Persia mainly if not wholly because she was now easiest channel through which interests of Allies in general and Great Britain in particular could be effectively assailed and he hoped problem was being considered from this point of view.

¹ Not printed.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'financial'.

³ This word was not in the text as sent from Tehran.

He continued that he had sent a telegram to Minister for Foreign Affairs instructing him to make representations in proper quarters in following sense and asked my support to his views.⁴

[1] That Batoum-Baku communications should again be placed under military control of Great Britain or Allies, and Caspian likewise.

2. That British forces based on Kazvin and (? Tiflis) respectively were quite inadequate to cope with present situation and should be reinforced to extent considered necessary in expert military opinion.

3. That Persia should be supplied urgently with 5,000 rifles for serving of (? advance) formations already organised or in the course of organisation also with proportion of machine guns and necessary ammunition for both.

4. That a squadron of aeroplanes should be provided at once.

5. That to meet necessary expenditure on joint needs of situation a sum of 1 million sterling should be made available to be expended on anti-Bolshevik measures to extent necessary under strict supervision of a joint committee appointed for the purpose.

As regards my private letter, my support⁵ to Prime Minister's views, I am aware whole position and outlook in this theatre must be under (? lively) consideration in Paris or London, and it is of little use my expressing opinions in regard to particular items but there can be no question that problem is a pressing one for Persian Government and I entirely agree as to importance of our evolving constructive plans of defence without delay.

Repeated to India.

⁴ A memorandum (not printed) embodying these views was handed to Lord Curzon in Paris by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs on or about Jan. 22.

⁵ The text received was here corrupt; as sent it read: 'As regards question of my support'.

No. 368

Earl Curzon to Mr. Lindsay (Washington)

No. 71 Telegraphic [170326/150/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 20, 1920, 11 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 26 (of January 13th).¹

Persia.

On grounds of friendship I do not propose to send any written reply to Mr. Davis' letter of October 7th² though I have told him privately what I think of the tone and substance of his rejoinder.

I must, however, strongly object to official publication being given to this unofficial correspondence as such a course is undesirable and unusual, and would render diplomatic negotiations between friends and Allies impossible.

¹ No. 366.

² Vol. IV, No. 808; cf. No. 366.

No. 369

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 43 Telegraphic [173052/150/34]*¹*

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 26, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 25 of 17th January.²

You will have seen from my telegram No. 41 of 21st January, repeated to you from Tiflis,³ that Supreme Council have accepted principle of sending help in materials and goods to Transcaucasus, and it is hoped by this means to avert immediate danger of a Bolshevik advance on Persia.

Repeat to India.

¹ Throughout this volume an asterisk after the file number denotes that the document has been printed from Confidential Print, see Preface, pp. vii-viii.

² No. 367.

³ Not printed; cf. Vol. III, No. 652.

No. 370

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 30, 1.20 p.m.)

No. 37 Telegraphic [174933/165162/34]

TEHRAN, *January 28, 1920, 11.30 a.m.*

Your telegram No. 12 January 10th¹ and my immediately preceding telegram.²

Have discussed question with Prime Minister. He has instructed Governor-General to reply that appointments of Ministers and Consuls depends on treaties. No such treaty exists between Afghanistan and Persia and representatives cannot be received or recognized until matter has been discussed between the two Governments. Prime Minister however expresses opinion that contingency of representatives coming on in spite of above reply cannot be ignored and if force is used to prevent their entry into Meshed it is quite conceivable in present state of politics that Afghanistan might use incident to pick quarrel with Persia and attack her. Should such an eventuality arise, he enquires to what extent we should be able and prepared to assist Persia either directly on Khorassan frontier or by pressure on Afghanistan from Indian frontier.

Sent to India and Meshed No. 8 with reference to Meshed telegram No. 23.

¹ No. 365.

² Of Jan. 28, not printed. This transmitted the text of a telegram from H.M. Consul-General at Meshed, reporting that the Afghan Consul-General for Meshed and the Afghan Minister to Tehran proposed to leave Herat for Meshed 'this week', that they had asked for 'facilities at frontiers', and that the Persian Governor-General of the province of Khorassan had wired for instructions.

No. 371

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 3, 11.40 a.m.)

No. 43 Telegraphic [175834/150/34]

TEHRAN, *January 29, 1920, 5.30 a.m.*

Your Lordship's telegram No. 41 to Tiflis was duly repeated to me on January 23rd¹ but I made no comment at the moment and took no action because trend of current Reuter's news rather indicated that Supreme Council were likely to decide ultimately upon more comprehensive measures for assisting Caucasian Governments and Persia to defend their territories against bolshevism.

Now that I have received your telegram No. 43 of January 26th² I can only respectfully represent that measures proposed cannot be regarded as in any way safeguarding situation as far as Persia is concerned.

In the first instance, failing physical control or support by Allied troops it is quite possible that elements which we are providing with munitions of war and supplies may themselves turn Bolshevik more particularly Baku Government which is very uncertain quantity.

Secondly, no account is taken of position on Caspian. Fall of Krasnovodsk cannot be delayed very long, and, apart from immediate effect it may have on situation at Baku, it will give great impetus to Bolshevik propaganda against Persia and ourselves and to penetration of Bolshevik parties into Persia through Caspian ports and consequent disaffection of Turcos.³

If I can give Prime Minister no more than cold comfort provided in your telegram under reply, I am afraid Cabinet barometer will fall considerably.

¹ See No. 369.

² No. 369.

³ The text as sent read: 'Turkomans'.

No. 372

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 49 Telegraphic [175065/150/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 31, 1920, 9 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 8 of 6th January:¹ Customs Tariff revision.

We cannot agree to the Prime Minister's proposals. To admit them would imply that Persia has the right on her own initiative to modify a treaty without consulting the co-signatory.

You should point out that the only tariff to be revised is that included in Anglo-Persian Convention of 1903,² and there is no mention of treaties of other nations in the Anglo-Persian Agreement.

Inform Sir H. Llewellyn Smith.³

¹ No. 363.

² Printed in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 96, pp. 51 ff.

³ Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith was the British representative on the committee to revise the Persian tariff.

No. 373

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 67 Telegraphic [175834/150/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 7, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 43 of 29th January:¹ Bolshevik menace.

We are fully conscious that steps taken by Allies cannot be regarded as rendering situation either in Persia or Caucasus secure. But they were the maximum of which our joint resources admitted. It is of no use for Persian Government or anyone else to expect sudden appearance of large bodies of Allied troops when it is perfectly well known that these are not and cannot be forthcoming. Recognition of Caucasian Government[s] and promise to them of arms, munitions, and supplies may very likely deter Bolsheviks from attempting to cross Caucasus, and should enable the States, particularly if they co-operate, to put up a stiff resistance. Uncertainty of position in Azerbaijan was recognised, but it was better to run this risk than to do nothing at all.

Position in Caspian is thoroughly understood and was exhaustively considered. We should have liked to replace British flotilla and personnel, and were prepared to run considerable risks for that object. But Admiralty were unable to sanction the venture unless War Office would guarantee the security of Baku, and War Office would not do the latter unless two Allied divisions with a third in reserve could be provided to hold the Batoum-Baku line.

These were not forthcoming, and the scheme was reluctantly dropped.²

Had the defence of Transcaspia and Khorassan been attempted five more divisions would have been required, which *a fortiori* could not be supplied.

We are doing all in our power to stabilise situation, and will help Persian Government to best of our ability. But I am a little tired of their constant attempt to make us responsible for the consequences of their own inertia and incapacity in the past, and think that they are disposed both to ask and to complain over much.

¹ No. 371.

² Cf. Vol. III, No. 640; also Vol. XII, No. 518, n. 1.

No. 374

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 19, 9.40 a.m.)

No. 78 Telegraphic [179625/150/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, *February 18, 1920, 5.30 p.m.*

Following from Norperforce¹ February 17th.

Begins

Should Bolsheviks capture Petrovsk in addition to Krasnovodsk there is every possibility of their securing the Caspian fleet, if not before, after² Volga

¹ i.e. the British force in North Persia.

² The text as sent read: 'if not before, at any rate after,'.

has thawed. This will place Enzeli in a precarious position. No doubt this is realised but would you approach the War Office urging that naval gun personnel may be sent to Baku while there is yet time to take over or assist the volunteer fleet.³

Ends.

If the Foreign Office agree perhaps the War Office could be asked to take immediate action.⁴

³ i.e. the fleet supporting Gen. Denikin.

⁴ In his telegram No. 87 of Feb. 20 Lord Curzon replied that the Caspian situation had been explained in his No. 67 (No. 373 above). He added that he had 'asked the War Office to repeat to military attaché a telegram sent to General Officer Commanding, Mesopotamia, regarding possible steps to be taken at Enzeli'. This telegram contained the following instructions: 'You should . . . make arrangements with your Force in North Persia to offer a bold front to Bolsheviks should they threaten Enzeli and endeavour by bluff to prevent them seriously attacking that place. At the same time, if seriously attacked, there is no intention of holding on to Enzeli and your arrangements should be made so that the withdrawal of your detachment from Enzeli is assured. This force, whilst withdrawing will, of course, endeavour during its withdrawal to delay the advance of the Bolsheviks by every means at its disposal. In this connection you will, no doubt, make full use of the advantages offered by the Menzil Pass for delaying a Bolshevik advance.'

'In order to assist you we hope to send you some 4-inch Q[ui]ck F[ir]ing guns shortly. Meanwhile, if possible, the despatch by you of a section of field artillery, and such reinforcements as you consider necessary, to Enzeli should be considered.'

No. 375

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 27, 10 p.m.)

No. 83 Telegraphic [181774/150/34]

TEHRAN, February 21, 1920, 11.30 a.m.

Reference Foreign Office telegrams Nos. 67¹ and 80,² and Government of India's telegram No. 132 S. February 2nd to Secretary of State for India.³

I am grateful to your Lordship for acquainting me so fully with circumstances and considerations which have prompted decision of His Majesty's Government in regard to action in this region and I realise enormous difficulties with which they are confronted.

As to shortcomings of Persian Government in the past I fear there can be no question, but it is fair to remember that this Cabinet with our generous moral and material support have done a very great deal during past 18 months to improve internal conditions and check disorder, so that state of trade routes and provinces is better now than it has been at any time since Constitution.⁴ This at any rate is a useful prophylactic against infection of Bolshevik ideas. Against active aggression present Government is powerful⁵ and as our own interests are involved as well as those of Persia, it is incumbent on me to ensure that His Majesty's Government are under no illusion as to outlook.

¹ No. 373.

² Of Feb. 17, not printed.

³ Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

⁴ i.e. since 1906.

⁵ The text as sent read: 'Against active aggression now the Government is powerless'.

If Allies or His Majesty's Government alone are not in a position to do any more than is indicated in correspondence above cited, and if alternatively there is no intention in future to make terms with Soviet, then they must expect that situation in Persia will speedily deteriorate.

The decision reported by Reuter to evacuate Batoum,⁶ as to ground of which there is no information, has caused fresh agitation of official and public mind here and withdrawal of our troops from Eastern Persia (of which I hear rumours), if ordered before Persia is in a position to fill the breach and before present danger is overpast, would be regarded as nothing short of the betrayal of (? Cabinet)⁷ and I would respectfully remind your Lordship that both in your speech of September 18th⁸ which was widely promulgated in Persia and in your memorandum to Cabinet on August 9th⁹ the advantages of the agreement as an insurance against Bolshevism were specifically emphasised. Personally I have not hitherto believed that Bolsheviks had serious intention of aggression against Persia. It seemed that they were merely endeavouring by intensive propaganda to intimidate us into making terms with them, but I am bound to say reports coming in and developments taking place of late make it unsafe to assume that any longer, and it must be remembered that if they do carry out their aggression into Persia it is not from any hostility to this Government, towards whom they have always professed the most benevolent intention, but because they regard Persia as one of shortest routes to London.

Present position is that many small parties of Bolsheviks and some well-known terrorists have already entered Persia. Some have been arrested, others have got through, and papers that have been seized disclose a large organisation.

Pro-Bolshevik committees engineered by Bolshevik agents are coming into existence in Tehran and towns near northern frontier, and opponents of this Cabinet amongst local party politicians are quick to seize on any alarmist report to create unrest and excite feeling against Government.

Prime Minister has again interviewed me on the subject. All that is possible is being done to hurry on organisation of military force and I have as far as possible reassured him as regards immediate outlook in Caucasus, but of course the important factors for Persia are

- (1) The control of Caspian and
- (2) The holding of line from (? Tabriz) to Astara and Enzeli to Astrabad, as indicated in my telegram No. 747 of 21st November.¹⁰

Both from our own point of view and his I respectfully urge that position be reconsidered and that possibility of first obtaining control of Caspian with

⁶ For this decision see Vol. XII, Nos. 496 and 497.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'short of a betrayal and I would'.

⁸ Lord Curzon had delivered a speech on Anglo-Persian relations at a banquet given at the Carlton Hotel, London, in honour of the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs; see *The Times*, Sept. 19, 1919, p. 11.

⁹ Vol. IV, No. 710.

¹⁰ Ibid., No. 852.

less force than that indicated in your telegram No. 67, and secondly adopting plan outlined in my telegram No. 747 in conjunction with and (? with) support of Government troops, be again examined.

Repeated to India.

No. 376

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 25, 9.10 a.m.)

No. 89 Telegraphic [180790/165162/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, February 24, 1920, 5.30 p.m.

Please see correspondence ending with Your Lordship's telegram No. 12 dated January 10th.¹ In answer to reply of Persian Government, that as no Treaty existed between Persia and Afghanistan there was no justification for a Consulate General, Governor of Herat writes to Governor-General of Khorassan saying that he has accordingly instructed Consul General to stand fast but that it is proposed instead to send Sardur-Abdul-Aziz to Teheran to negotiate Treaty between two Governments.

Messenger is awaiting reply.

I have explained to Prime Minister view expressed in last paragraph of telegram 1651 S from Government of India² but he is more inclined, in existing critical circumstances, to agree to coming of envoy above-mentioned provided he comes alone. His argument is that if envoy comes they will see what is in the mind of Afghan Government and can protract negotiations and finally break them off as may seem necessary. On the other hand he fears that refusal to receive envoy would very likely be seized upon as a reason for hostile action. His Highness will however await Your Lordship's reply but if His Majesty's Government wish to press for rejection of overtures he asks that we will make request formally and defin[itely] share risk of any inconvenient consequences which may ensue. Please reply 'Clear the Line'.³

Sent to Government of India 89, repeated to Consul-General, Meshed 19 for General Malleon's Mission.

¹ No. 365.

² This telegram of Dec. 6, 1919, is not printed. The reference here is presumably to the last sentence which read as follows: 'If Afghan Government eventually address Persian Government on the subject we suggest they should be . . . advised to refuse consent to establishment of Consul-General until situation in Central Asia is tranquil.'

³ i.e. with a telegram having high priority.

No. 377

Earl Curzon to Sir J. Jordan¹ (Peking)

No. 72 Telegraphic [181081/175556/10]

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 27, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 46.²

His Majesty's Government have foregone right to control Afghan foreign relations and therefore logically his Majesty's Representatives abroad are no

¹ H.M. Minister at Peking.

² Of Jan. 28, not printed.

longer obliged to assist Afghan subjects. Article 4 of Treaty provides however for further discussion after 6 months³ and pending final settlement Afghan attempts to obtain direct representation abroad should be in no way encouraged. When unable to evade question, His Majesty's Representatives should act provisionally on their previous instructions referring specially difficult cases to His Majesty's Government.

Text of treaty follows.⁴ Repeat to Tokio.

³ The reference is to the Anglo-Afghan treaty of Aug. 8, 1919, the text of which is printed as No. 66 in Cmd. No. 324 of 1919.

⁴ Sent as enclosure in Foreign Office despatch No. 117 of March 4.

No. 378

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 103 Telegraphic [180790/165162/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 28, 1920, 3.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 89 (of February 24th).¹

You may inform Prime Minister that in the circumstances we think the Afghan Envoy should be allowed to proceed to Teheran. Persian Government should endeavour to induce him not to bring any escort, but if this is not possible the escort should in no circumstances exceed that attached to His Majesty's Legation.

Repeated to India.

¹ No. 376.

No. 379

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 29, 10.30 p.m.)

No. 95 Telegraphic [182161/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *February 28, 1920, 9.10 p.m.*

Work of Tariff Commission has been proceeding very rapidly and smoothly and they hope to have their business practically finished by February 29th and to be able to leave next week.

Question of compensation duty to be imposed on sugar is the one outstanding difficulty.

On the one hand this item must clearly be the main factor employed to effect the desired increase in revenue. On the other, the question of amount of increase to be imposed has a political bearing and I do not feel justified in intimating concurrence of Legation without reference to His Majesty's Government.

The position is this: increase in revenue expected from modifications of Tariff, agreed upon by Commission, apart from sugar, is estimated at approximately fifteen million Krans.

As regards sugar, Persian Government press for increase of duty on loaf

sugar to two Krans per batman¹ and one and three-quarter Krans on crystals and powder. British Representatives on the Commission are opposed to so high a permanent duty but would be willing to assent to a permanent duty of one Kran on loaf and three-quarters of a Kran on crystals and powder together with a temporary additional surtax of one Kran leviable on imported and native sugars alike for next two years on all, giving time for development of alternative source of revenue. We estimate increased yield from sugar under (? either) scheme to be approximately thirty million Krans rising to perhaps fifty million but Persian Representatives, basing calculations on pre-war imports, make a considerably higher estimate.

Increase of dues on sugar to the above extent has following political aspects:

1. To what extent is it likely to cause ebullition of public resentment or to become handle for political opponents of Cabinet to attack them and agreement?
2. Is it likely to arouse the sugar trade on ground that we are heavily penalising a commodity in which . . .² (have any) interests?

The arguments of Persian Government are as follows:

Sugar is the one article of general consumption capable of yielding a large immediate revenue without injury to trade. European example shows that all countries regard sugar as a suitable object of high taxation and Persia, if free to do so, would have increased her sugar duties largely some time ago. The present high price of sugar in Persia, as compared with the world's price, is mainly the result of indirect transport charges compared with which a duty of two Krans would be almost imperceptible to consumer so that Cabinet are confident that there is little risk of public resentment. Moreover war experience has shown that sugar prices may rise and fluctuate very largely without checking consumption and in these circumstances there is no fear of revenue suffering. If consumption is maintained, there will be no ground for criticism from sugar-producing countries for duty will fall on Persian consumers.

If increase is refused there is no chance of sufficient revenue to meet cost of gendarmerie and of improved communications, without which no additional internal revenues can be expected.

Sir H. L. Smith and his colleagues, while admitting force of some of these arguments, consider there are grave objections to proposal to rely for so large a proportion of permanent income of Persia on heavy taxation of a single article of consumption which must inevitably cause the poorer classes to bear more than their proportionate share of taxation while the richer classes notoriously escape their due share of the burden. While accepting view that in the present exceptional state of the market and transport, high duty proposed might be hardly felt by consumers, except near the gulf ports, they consider that when normal conditions and prices return a duty of two Krans would be disproportionately heavy and would either check consumption or

¹ The Man or Batman was a Persian unit of weight.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'in which we ourselves are not interested'.

be an undue burden on the poor. If full duty is permanently allowed it must weaken incentive to reorganise land revenue, which many of the governing class dread for personal reasons. Nevertheless, they consider that a good case is made out for an initial increase of sugar duty to amount proposed by Persians, as only possible means, except continually borrowing from the British Government, of meeting cost of preliminary steps necessary to develop land revenue which if properly re-organised, is probably capable of a greatly increased yield. They consider (? therefore) that one half of duty should be temporary, to be reconsidered in two years' time, when progress made in meantime towards re-organisation of land revenue can be taken into account.

If, as is proposed, temporary sur-tax is leviable also on native produced sugar, this ought to remove possible apprehensions of sugar-exporting countries that there is an intention to exclude their sugar by high protective barrier. There will however be little or no native produced sugar during the next few years and France, which might otherwise have protested, is unlikely to have any sugar to export for some years. The Persian Government are now willing, as result of discussion, to accept scheme favoured by this Commission if His Majesty's Government also agree.

My own views follow immediately.²

² See No. 380 below.

No. 380

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 1, 9.55 a.m.)

No. 97 Telegraphic [182144/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, February 29, 1920, 4 p.m.

My telegram No. 95.¹

There can be no doubt that if we wish to obtain some immunity from constant appeals for small advances and some further security for future loans we must contemplate a very considerable increase in customs revenues. That in fact was primary object of tariff.

As regards sugar, however, proposals of Persian Government as originally presented caused me considerable misgiving as to the effect the increase would have on public feeling and its probable reaction against Cabinet and ourselves, who support it.

But Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Administrator General of Customs expressed confident view that even increase proposed by them would not call forth any dangerous, or even inconvenient, measure of opposition; and that, in practice, the effect of increased duty would be lost in the welter of excessive transport charges and other abnormally expensive conditions of trade still existing as result of war. As finally whittled down by British members of Commission, proposals are much less formidable and although I think that we must expect opponents of Cabinet to make use of any

¹ No. 379.

convenient items of tariff reform proposals in general for making difficulties for Cabinet, yet, if latter feel sure of their public, I do not consider that we are called upon to make difficulties.

As regards probable attitude of Foreign Powers interested His Majesty's Government are in the best position to judge what degree of criticism or opposition may be expected.

Here in Tehran Sir H. L. Smith has met all my colleagues separately and has discussed general trend of proposed reforms with each in an informal way and asked each if he had any particular point affecting his national trade to which he would like to draw the attention of Commission.

All seemed quite friendly disposed and Italian Minister made some specific suggestions which were adjusted as he desired.

I now learn however that, after his interview with Sir Hubert, French Minister asked for interview with Prime Minister, and protested or objected to Tariff Commission dealing with questions affecting trade of Foreign Powers without their being brought into deliberations. Prime Minister replied that present Tariff Commission was simply dealing with tariff arranged between England and Persia under 1903 Convention; that he could not agree that the two parties were called upon to consult other Powers now any more than then, and that France was of course entitled to [? most] favoured nation treatment. There the matter ended but I report incident for your information.

I trust that above data will suffice to enable His Majesty's Government to come to a speedy decision and if so that it will be possible to send me a 'clear the line' reply to reach me by Thursday March 4th in order that commission may be able, as they hope, to leave by Caucasian route at the end of the week.²

² In his telegram No. 110 of March 3 Lord Curzon informed Sir P. Cox that he might 'act as proposed regarding duty on sugar'. In his immediately following telegram, No. 111 of the same day, he accepted the proposal of the Tariff Commission reported in Sir P. Cox's telegram No. 99 of March 1 (not printed) that this new agreement should take effect on March 22 'or as soon thereafter as necessary customs arrangements can be made'.

No. 381

Lord Chelmsford¹ to Mr. Montagu² (Received March 11)³

P. 1955. No. 251 S Telegraphic [185289/106000/38]

Secret

March 3, 1920⁴

My telegram dated 24th [25th] February, No. 216S.⁵

Kashgar telegraphs 20th February, received 1st March:—

'Following from Ferghana, dated Gulcha, 14th February.

'Definite split has occurred in Ferghana Provisional Government which is now practically defunct. Monstroff (please see my Despatch 247, dated

¹ Viceroy of India.

² Mr. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India.

³ A printed copy was sent to the Foreign Office by the India Office on March 13.

⁴ This and similar telegrams do not record the place or hour of despatch.

⁵ Not printed.

21st November)⁶ with majority of Ferghana peasantry has gone over to the Bolsheviks. Mahomed Emin, Khal Khoja, and . . .⁷ are operating separately between Gulcha and Khokand. Bolsheviks intend to occupy Ferghana in force as soon as the weather conditions permit.

'In Semirechia resistance to the Bolsheviks has ceased and they now occupy the whole province.

'Bolsheviks have moved troops near Chinese frontier in Ili and Chuguchak, and have renewed their demand to Governor of Chinese Turkestan for (? surrender of) Russian Consuls at Ili, Chuguchak and Kashgar, and appointed Bolshevik Consuls in their place, whilst they also demand return of refugees now in Chinese territory. In the event of refusal Bolsheviks threaten to occupy Ili.

'Representative of Tashkent Bolsheviks has just arrived at Kashgar to request resumption of trade and surrender of Russian Consul and appointment of Bolshevik Consul. Chinese reply will be non-committal pending developments.

'Russian Officer Commanding Tashkurghan arrived at Kashgar yesterday and reports that Afghan agents are active on the Russian Pamirs, and there is renewed evidence of their intention (? to) assume leading rôle in Russian Central Asia.

'With reference to all of above further report and an appreciation of situation will be telegraphed to you on the receipt of further information which I am expecting.'⁸

While whole question of advice to be offered to China regarding acceptance of Soviet representatives is one for His Majesty's Government, India is specially interested in question of Soviet representation in Kashgar, as it is known that Soviet plan includes organisation of service of (? emissaries) to Indian frontier tribes through the Pamirs.

Two. Following is purport of copy cypher telegram dated 2nd January, from Central Government, Moscow, to Turkestan, special, Tashkent, obtained by Kashgar:—

'Turkestan must not be independent republic, but province of Soviet Russia. All available supplies from Turkestan must at once be sent to Moscow. Only Moslems elected to Soviet must be those of quiet temperament. Two divisions of picked troops are being sent to Turkestan, and on their arrival not less than half a million Mahomedans under training should be mobilised, of which part will be sent to Russia, but majority through Bokhara and Persia against (? British). On the way these troops will rouse

⁶ Not traced in Foreign Office archives. Captain Monstroff, an officer of the former Russian Imperial army, had been a leader in the anti-Soviet rising in Sept. 1919 which had led to the formation of the Ferghana Provisional Government.

⁷ The text is here uncertain.

⁸ A copy of this later telegram from Ferghana, dated Feb. 21, was transmitted by the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India in telegram P. 2302, No. 298 S of March 15. It confirmed the demise of the Ferghana Provisional Government and stated that some 54 Russian refugees were seeking permission to enter Chinese territory.

populations of Afghanistan and Persia to revolution. They will be known as Red Mussulman troops of Asia.'

(Para. 1 repeated to Peking.)

No. 382

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 10, 4.30 p.m.)

No. 111 Telegraphic [184304/150/34]

TEHRAN, March 9, 1920, 7 p.m.

Agreement as now signed¹ follows lines of telegram 79, February 18th from Llewellyn Smith to Chapman² with following alterations besides some verbal changes which do not materially alter effect of provisions.

In paragraph 10 quinquennial periods are substituted for septennial, right of requiring revision is given to both Governments and not only to Persia, and revision is extended to Customs regulations as well as tariff.³ Paragraph 11 is amended to read as follows.

'Provisions of Convention and of present agreement (with the exception of tariffs and customs regulations, periodic revision of which is provided for by preceding paragraph) shall remain in force until expiration of twelve months from date on which either of parties shall have given notice of termination. It is however understood that such notice cannot be given until expiration of a period to be fixed forthwith by an exchange of notes between high contracting parties.'⁴

Following new paragraphs are added: (between 5 and 6)

'Should any article produced in Persia be subjected to an excise duty such duty shall not be leviable on similar imported goods of British origin; but in the event of any rate of excise duty established and levied generally throughout Persia on tobacco, opium, spirits, or salt, exceeding import duty leviable on similar goods, it shall be competent for Persian Govern-

¹ The text of this agreement modifying the Anglo-Persian Commercial Convention of Feb. 1903 is printed in Cmd. 1011 of 1920, together with the Exchange of Notes on March 21 between H.M.G. and the Persian Government accepting the recommendations of the Mixed Commission and agreeing 'that the period mentioned in paragraph 13 [previously numbered 11] of the Agreement shall be five years'.

² Not printed. Sir Sidney Chapman, Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade.

³ The earlier draft read: '10. It is agreed that on expiration of 7 years from present date and of each subsequent septennial period it shall be competent for Persian Government by notice given within six months to British Minister, Tehran, to require a joint meeting of experts representing two high contracting Powers to take place within a further period of six months for the purpose of revising by common accord the tariff appended to convention so as to adapt it to altered circumstances.'

⁴ The earlier draft read: '11. The rules being silent as to its duration it is agreed that it shall continue in force until expiration of twelve months from date on which either of parties shall have given notice of termination. It is understood that no such notice can be given to Persian Government so long as any foreign loan is outstanding for which customs revenue is pledged as security.'

ment without waiting for date of next revision to increase import duty by an amount not more than the excess provided that if at any time excise duty is diminished or discontinued, rate of import duties shall be reduced accordingly.'

[The term 'products of the soil' in article 3 of the Convention is to be construed as including foodstuffs and materials of industry. Accordingly the words 'or materials of industry' shall be added at the end of the article. It is understood that no prohibition can be imposed except by special Government order or decree.

(At end of agreement)]⁵

'Preceding paragraphs refer exclusively to meaning and scope of convention of 9th February, 1903, relative to commercial and customs relations between two high contracting Powers and in no way prejudice question of legal and judicial status of nationals of countries placed under (? British) protection or administration since 1914.' Ends.

Reference to exchange of notes in paragraph 11 was introduced in order to give time to obtain instructions from His Majesty's Government in regard to period without delaying signature of report of Commission which is now leaving Tehran. Commission favour period of five years which Persian Government are prepared to accept. I request authority to agree to this period in exchange of notes approving agreement.⁶ [As the power of denunciation will not extend to the Persian tariff and Customs Regulations it will not affect security of loans.]⁵

⁵ The passages within square brackets have been printed from the copy of the telegram in the Tehran Legation archives, as the text as received in the Foreign Office was here very corrupt.

⁶ See n. 1 above.

No. 383

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 12, 8.45 a.m.)

No. 115 Telegraphic [184774/842/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 11, 1920, 11.30 a.m.

Understanding that whole field of railway construction in Persia both from strategical and commercial standpoints was under examination of experts in London¹ I have confined myself lately to sending on such telegrams or information in regard to developments of particular items as seemed likely to affect their deliberations.

I now beg to be informed if possible of general conclusions arrived at by experts and in second place to offer following observations on the present outlook as it presents itself to me.

It seems clear that British interests commercial and strategical lie mainly in construction of lines from Gulf ports outwards and upwards to the heart

¹ See Vol. IV, Nos. 823 and 863.

of Persia, e.g. Bunder Abbas Kerman. Bushire Shiraz. Mohammerah Hamadan. Baghdad Hamadan.

Baghdad Teheran has now been arranged for but by the time it is likely to reach Teheran Russians will presumably have revived and with a continuation to the Caspian, line would mainly be used for distributing Russian goods and if in the mean time we had not constructed other channels for British trade from the Gulf our trade would be very much prejudiced.

Our best course therefore would seem to be to start several projects concurrently from the Gulf and carry them to convenient points for promoting our trade rather than to push through trunk lines beyond those points which would then serve Russian trade rather than ours.

Bushire Borasjon [*sic*] line referred to in my immediately following telegram² is a case in point.

Repeated to India.

² No. 384 below.

No. 384

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 12, 10.50 a.m.)

No. 116 Telegraphic [184775/842/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 11, 1920, 11.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 94 of February 28th regarding Bushire Borasjun railway.¹

On the one hand it appears Government of India are seriously contemplating dismantling line: on the other hand Bushire informs me that Anglo-Persian Oil Company have been recommended by their local surveyor to offer to take over line *en bloc* in their own interests.

I beg to recommend very strongly that His Majesty's Government actively promote this solution of problem both as being suitable in itself and also from comprehensive point of view referred to in my immediately preceding telegram.²

[Sent to] India 116 and Bushire 31.

¹ Not printed.

² No. 383.

No. 385

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 13, 8 a.m.)

No. 123 Telegraphic [185176/202/34]

TEHRAN, March 12, 1920, 6.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 118 March 11th reporting reference by Starosselski to Sazanof [*sic*] for instructions.¹

Prime Minister asks that if relations of His Majesty's Government with

¹ Not printed. Col. Starosselski was Commander of the Russian-trained Persian Cossack division. M. Sazonov was a member of the White Russian administration then in Paris.

Sazanof admit thereof it should be explained to him that His Majesty's Government cannot go on subsidising division indefinitely and he should be pressed to instruct Starosselski that if he cannot bring himself to fall in with measures decided upon by the two Governments for pacific solution of the problem he should resign and leave Persia.

Prime Minister's idea is that if such authoritative advice were given to Starosselski and he ignored it or if Sazanof declined to instruct him as desired Starosselski would be put in the (? wrong) and Persian Government be placed in a stronger position to deal effectively with him.

Sent to India 123 and Bagdad for General Officer Commanding.

No. 386

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 13, 3.15 p.m.)

No. 124 Telegraphic [185215/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 12, 1920, 6.30 p.m.

Today a lengthy conference of which I shall telegraph résumé separately,¹ took place between General Officer Commanding Norper Force,² General Dickson,³ Prime Minister,⁴ Sarem-ed-Dowleh⁵ and myself on the subject of military situation with special reference first to Bolshevik menace and extent to which Persian Government would be able and willing to co-operate in defensive measures by Norper Force with Persian formations at present available, and secondly discussion of policy to be adopted or action to be taken under the circumstances in regard to [Cossack] division.

Prime Minister as at present advised fell in with such proposals for arranging some practical co-operation as we could suggest, but in every case our deliberations ultimately worked round to question as to what our attitude was to be in the event of serious Bolshevik invasion of Persia and Prime Minister asked me to telegraph urgently to His Majesty's Government asking for specific replies on following points.

1. Is there any reasonable probability of Allies making terms with Soviet before Volga opens a month hence?⁶

2. It being obvious British troops now in Persia are not sufficient to resist any Bolshevik invasion in force, have His Majesty's Government intention and power to organise (with such co-operation as Persia can give) any barrier or opposition to Bolshevik advance which they can confidently regard as likely to be effective?

3. Alternatively if seriously pressed do His Majesty's Government contemplate retiring from Persia and simply defending frontiers of India, thus leaving Persia to be overrun?

¹ i.e. No. 387 below.

² Gen. H. B. Champain.

³ British representative on the joint Anglo-Persian Military Commission provided for in Article 3 of the Anglo-Persian Agreement of Aug. 9, 1919; see Vol. IV, Chap. V, especially No. 713.

⁴ Vossugh-ed-Dowleh.

⁵ Persian Minister of Finance.

⁶ Preliminary negotiations were beginning at this time for the resumption of trade relations between Great Britain and Soviet Russia; see Vol. XII, Nos. 667-8.

4.7 General officers above mentioned and I are of opinion developments have reached a point at which it is incumbent on us to inform Persian Government where they stand.

(Sent to India 124 and Bagdad for G.O.C.)

⁷ This paragraph was unnumbered in the text as sent from Tehran.

No. 387

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 14, 9 a.m.)

No. 126 Telegraphic [185352/202/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 13, 1920, 12 noon

Please see my telegram 585 of August 29th¹ and my telegram 804 of December 27th² to Foreign Office only pressing for continuation of our subsidy to Cossack division until Military Commission³ had presented their report and solution of difficulty had been achieved.

Joint Commissions [*sic*] will present report before Naoruz,⁴ and as regards Cossack Division it will advise unanimously that Division together with South Persia Rifles and Gendarmerie be transferred into uniform Regular Army while ordinary needs of Civil Government will be met by present police force, which must be increased as necessary.

Meanwhile British members of Commission represented to me that in view of liveliness of Bolshevik menace from Caspian direction against us and in view of doubtful loyalty of Division either to us or Persian Government it was urgent to tackle Cossack problem at once so that this element of danger might if possible be removed before opening of Volga enabled Bolsheviks to develop their plans. Matter was accordingly discussed between Prime Minister, General Dickson and myself and it was decided that as we had hitherto been frank with Starosselski Prime Minister should send for him and inform him of recommendations which (as Starosselski was well aware) Joint Commission were on point of making and ask him if he was prepared to co-operate and if not how he thought his personal interests and future could be fairly met.

Starosselski replied as before that he had no power to be a party to any alteration of the organization of the Division and⁵ based on Treaties which he regarded as still in force and all that he could suggest was that the force should be reduced, but kept separate in its present form. He added Shah also had given him assurances and would not agree to disappearance of Division. Prime Minister then asked me to interview Starosselski and (? I) took up the thread from where (? he had) left it. Starosselski maintained same attitude. He said that if he (? co-operat)ed in any way he would be regarded as having traitorously sacrificed Russian interests; what he would like would be that the force should be retained but reduced, if that was not

¹ Vol. IV, No. 741.

² Not printed.

³ See No. 386, n. 3.

⁴ The Persian New Year (Nauruz) due to begin on March 21.

⁵ The text as sent read: 'which was based'.

possible he could not personally accept position and would leave Persia for Europe and England. He laid stress on difficulty of his position in that he had no responsible authority to whom he could refer (? but in) the present circumstances he thought that before he committed himself to a final reply he should ask M. Sazonoff for instructions.

This he did on 9th instant, through Russian Chargé d'Affaires. Latter informed me he had telegraphed as requested by Starosselski and spoke on same lines as latter. It was clear, primary object of both was to get us to adopt solution which one way or another would delay (? final disappearance of) Division as such until Shah returned⁶ or some other political development served to prevent it. M. Sazonoff's reply awaited.

On March 12th Conference took place as reported in my telegram 124 to Foreign Office.⁷ General Officer Commanding Nor-Per Force explained to Prime Minister rôle he was instructed to play, namely to put up as effective an opposition to any Bolshevik attempt to land force at Enzeli as bluff and troops at disposal would allow, and if he did not succeed as anticipated in presenting⁸ it, to retire on his communications, disputing way.⁹ He added that the primary object of his visit was to ascertain what (? amount) of co-operation he might expect from Persian Government in the shape of Gendarmerie or other formations except Cossack Division.

In result it was agreed a few hundred Gendarmerie could be made available for guarding posts on line of communications and for patrolling coast east and west of Enzeli. It was also decided to utilise Colonel Smyth¹⁰ and his three officers to organise levies now in course of formation and to recruit others. Prime Minister in (? signify)ing his concurrence (? represented)¹¹ that these were quite insignificant half measures and in the event of any serious intrusion would not affect situation.

He then turned to question of his (? repeated) suggestion and appeals for assistance during past (? six months) and of ultimate intentions of His Majesty's Government in case of serious Bolshevik intrusion.

Question of Starosselski and Cossack Division was then discussed. Prime Minister produced a letter from Starosselski (? in reply to) a demand of Governor-General of Tabriz for urgent despatch of a detachment of Cossacks to quell disturbances at Khalkhal. In this letter Starosselski remarked that as Persian Government had now made it (? clear) they contemplated disappearance of Division in spite of its (? many) services to country they could hardly expect any enthusiasm or loyalty henceforth on part of Division and that in any case compliance with present requisition was not feasible. In view of this letter Prime Minister and Minister of Finance expressed confident opinion that Starosselski had not the slightest intention of leaving Persia

⁶ The Shah had been in Europe since Aug. 1919; cf. Vol. IV, Chap. V, *passim*.

⁷ No. 386.

⁸ The text as sent read: 'preventing'.

⁹ See No. 374, n. 4.

¹⁰ Lt.-Col. H. Smyth had been lent to the Persian Government to reorganize the Persian gendarmerie in the province of Azerbaijan.

¹¹ The text as sent read: 'pointed out'.

voluntarily as he pretended unless of course he received definite instructions from M. Sazonoff.

From Military point of view it was the opinion of the Military Commission and also that of G.O.C. Nor-Per force having regard to his communications, that it was highly important if possible to settle the question of Cossack garrison in Teheran at once; that is before Volga opens and Bolshevik descent on Enzeli becomes possible. It was realised however that even supposing that this could be done safely with co-operation which Nor-Per force can at present afford, effect of such action on the various Cossack Garrisons in provinces could not be foreseen or controlled. This being the case, it was suggested that in order not to hostile and lose the services of Division at present we should content ourselves with getting rid of Starosselski and approaching other Russian officers with a view to their continuing at their posts and being associated in command of Units with a proportion of British officers. Such Russian officers would eventually be weeded out.

A third alternative discussed was that Starosselski should be informed by Persian Government that British Government would no longer pay monthly subsidy and that he must forthwith reduce numbers to what he could maintain on 60,000 tomans now paid by Persian Government, idea being that Division thus reduced would be an easier problem to handle and that many of the men disbanded would before long enlist in new force.

(? Fourth) alternative was to leave them as they are until we have collected enough British officers and organised sufficient troops to replace Cossack Garrisons. Persian Ministers on the whole favoured the third alternative, but here again pointed out that it was impossible to arrive at satisfactory conclusion until they knew what were ultimate intentions of His Majesty's Government in event of Bolshevik invasion. In latter connection Prime Minister expressed belief, in which we were inclined to agree, that present evidence seems (? indicate)¹² that line of Bolshevik intrusion would be *via* Asterabad rather than through Enzeli. Prime Minister finally emphasised extremely delicate position of Persian Government, remarking that though British were definitely at war with Bolsheviks Persia was not, and if British intended or were obliged to retire it might be best policy for Persia to come to understanding with Bolsheviks rather than . . .¹³ course of their reprisals. Moreover Persian Government probably feel that in the event of British retirement their only standby for maintenance of internal order would be Cossack Division and unless they can count on our generous support they may hesitate to break them up or alienate Division.

Such is position. We think that final conclusion as regards problem of Cossack Division must await M. Sazonoff's reply to Starosselski and replies of His Majesty's Government to these telegrams.

In conclusion we venture to emphasize that should we be unable to oppose a serious Bolshevik invasion of Persian soil either from Khorassan or from

¹² The text as sent read: 'seems to indicate'.

¹³ The text received was here uncertain: as sent it read: 'rather than court their reprisals'.

another direction present Government and Anglo-Persian Agreement would go by the board for presence of British officers in their Administration would become a source of danger rather than an advantage to them. Furthermore, in the event of retirement of Nor-Per force beyond Caspian or possibly before that, Military authorities would be confronted with formidable problem of evacuating Allied communities from Capital.

We cannot but think that apart from any reinforcements that G.O.C. Bagdad and India can immediately afford the simplest and cheapest means of protecting our own interests and of responding to Persians' moral claims to our protection and support now is to regain the (? control of) Caspian, and we earnestly hope possibility of doing this may again be considered.

(Repeated to India and Political, Bagdad 59 for G.O.C.)

No. 388

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 16, 7 p.m.)

No. 132 Telegraphic [185761/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 16, 1920, 11 a.m.

With reference to correspondence ending with my telegram No. 130 March 15th¹ Military Commission are anxious to point out that withdrawal of British troops from Persia at this juncture will seriously impede task of reorganising Persian Army. At present Persian Army quite inadequate for maintenance of internal order. Military Commission are of opinion that if withdrawal of British troops from Fars takes place, and if proposal to withdraw British troops from East Persia is also sanctioned by His Majesty's Government, situation in these areas will become dangerous and will react unfavourably on situation in rest of Persia.

To reorganise Persian Army and put it in a sufficient state of efficiency to cope with internal situation will alone take some time, and in view of fact that to some extent His Majesty's Government are (? offering)² on loan (? money) for re-organization, Commission are of opinion that full value can only be obtained for money spent if steps are taken by His Majesty's Government to secure tranquillity of country during process of re-organization.

Effect of any withdrawal on external situation has already been pointed out in my telegram above quoted.

Sent to India.

¹ Not printed.

² The text as sent read: 'providing'.

No. 389

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 136 Telegraphic [185967/150/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 16, 1920, 4 p.m.*

Tariff revision.

Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs has expressed anxiety as to effect on other foreign nations of tariff revision as now concluded.¹ His view had been that Persian Government would with the help of British expert advice revise customs tariff as an internal and domestic measure and then conclude with His Majesty's Government a general commercial treaty based thereon. If revised tariff formed an integral part of Treaty between His Majesty's Government and the Persian Government, other nations would obviously be in a position to refuse most-favoured-nation treatment, and to insist individually on separate tariff discussion. This would not have been difficult if certain Powers were not in all probability disposed to prove themselves unaccommodating. As matter stood Persian Government would shortly find themselves compelled to have as many tariffs as commercial treaties.

Do you consider that difficulty *vis-à-vis* of other Governments can be avoided and if so how? His Highness's view appears to have considerable force.

¹ Cf. No. 382. Prince Firuz Mirza Nosret-ed-Dowleh, Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, was at this time in London.

No. 390

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 137 Telegraphic [184774/842/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 16, 1920, 4 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 115 (of March 11th¹ Persian railways).

The whole question has been fully considered. As stated in my telegram No. 42² a branch to Enzeli is being discouraged. The other lines mentioned may come later if money can be found to build them. This seems to depend to a large extent on result of financial adviser's mission.³

Repeated to India.

¹ No. 383.

² Of Jan. 25, not printed. This had informed Sir P. Cox that the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs had 'given an option to the Persian Railway Syndicate which now includes Pearson, Vickers, and Armstrong, for survey of railway from Kuretu to Kermanshah, Hamadan and Tehran *via* Kazvin or other route with branch to Enzeli'. Lord Curzon added that the Foreign Office favoured the direct route from Hamadan to Tehran *via* Noheran.

³ Cf. Vol. IV, No. 842, and No. 847, para. 2; also Nos. 420 and 430 below.

No. 391

Letter from Earl Curzon to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs

[183535/150/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 18, 1920*

Your Highness,

I have received from His Majesty's Minister at Teheran a telegram to the effect that the Persian Prime Minister hopes to fix a date for the opening of the Majliss¹ so soon as the elections shall have made sufficient progress to justify such a step being taken.²

In these circumstances I have the honour to enquire whether Your Highness will be prepared to refer the Anglo-Persian Agreement of the 9th of August last to that assembly, so soon as it is constituted, in order that the recognition of that instrument by the Majliss may be secured at the earliest possible moment. I am anxious in accordance with the undertaking which I have given on behalf of the British Government to communicate the Agreement, in concert with the Persian Government, to the League of Nations at an early date. It appears to me, however, that an essential preliminary to such action on our part must be the recognition of the Agreement by the Majliss.

I have, &c.,
(in the absence of the S. of S.),
HARDINGE OF PENSURST

¹ The Persian Parliament.

² The reference is to Tehran telegram No. 106 of March 6. This had stated: 'Prime Minister is only waiting until elections have progressed far enough to ensure majority in favour of present policy.'

No. 392

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 150 Telegraphic [184935/842/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 20, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 116 (of March 11th).¹

Government of India have received instructions that no action should be taken for removal of line pending definite instructions from His Majesty's Government.

¹ No. 384.

No. 393

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 21, 7.15 p.m.)

No. 144 Telegraphic [186885/150/34]

Clear the line

TEHRAN, March 21, 1920, 12.40 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Belgian Minister informed me last night confidentially that French Minister was persistently pressing him and American and Russian representatives to join him in (? protesting against) tariff revision arrangement.

Belgian Minister continued that, on being pressed by French Minister, he had replied that He(? y)nssens² (? and his) deputy had assured him that new tariff was perfectly fair and above board and contained nothing to which Belgium could reasonably object, and that consequently any local protest on his part would seem like an unfriendly act to his British colleague, but that he had reported facts to his Foreign Office and if they saw any reason to object they would (? doubtless) do so there.

(? French Minister) argued that even if details were in[n]ocuous arrangement was objectionable in principle and should be opposed.

Belgian Minister declined to join in any concerted action, but does not know what the others may be doing.

Sent to India.

¹ No. 394 below. These two telegrams were despatched in reverse order.

² M. F. H. Heynssens, a Belgian, was Director-General of the Persian Customs.

No. 394

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 21, 7 p.m.)

No. 143 Telegraphic [186884/150/34]

Clear the line

TEHRAN, March 21, 1920, 12.50 p.m.

Your Lordship's telegram No. 141 (? March 18th).¹

Persian Government and I are issuing necessary instructions to local Customs directors *re* postponement of introduction of new tariff to April 1st.

With reference to your telegram 136,² please compare my telegram 8 of January 6th³ and your telegram 49 January 31st,⁴ in which a somewhat similar point was mooted and disposed of. I do not see how difficulty apprehended by Persian Foreign Minister can be altogether (? avoided). Whether we effect end in view by revision of tariff convention of 1903 or by accepting terms of a domestic measure by Persian Government, other Powers will in either case be at liberty to ask for a new Treaty if most-favoured-nation treatment does not satisfy them. In my judgment course we have taken puts us on strongest ground, and gives other Powers least reason to take step apprehended.

Moreover we have dealt with representatives of other Powers in most

¹ Not printed.

² No. 389.

³ No. 363.

⁴ No. 372.

sympathetic way locally, and matter has gone so far to become public that to recede from our position now would cause very bad impression and would certainly stimulate any Power who desired to make difficulties to start doing so.

I accordingly trust I shall be instructed to conclude transaction at once, and that fresh postponement after April 1st will not be necessary.

Sent to India.

No. 395

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 153 Telegraphic [185352/202/34]**

Most urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 22, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 123, 124, 126,¹ 130² and 132³ of 12th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 16th March respectively have engaged earnest attention of Eastern Committee,⁴ who have considered general situation in and around Persia.

Their conclusions may be summarised as follows, taking points in same order as raised by you:—

1. Relations of His Majesty's Government with Russian administration in Paris are not of such nature as to justify any representation to M. Sazonov regarding General [*sic*] Starosselski, whose position will be dealt with later in this telegram.

2. Allied Governments have no intention of making terms with Soviet in sense mentioned.

3. It is impossible to contemplate despatch to Persia of any reinforcements other than such small parties as General Officer Commanding, Bagdad, may himself be able to supply. On the other hand, while an endeavour will be made to maintain advanced position in Khorasan, lines of communication on east front cannot be continued on present enormously costly basis.

Attitude of General Officer Commanding Norper force, in explaining his possible line of action to Persian Prime Minister, is approved.

Military opinion here is, however, convinced that any attack in force by Bolsheviks against Persia is most improbable and may practically be discounted. Real danger lies in infiltration of Bolshevik individual agents or small parties and spread of insidious propaganda, which could not be prevented, even by largely augmented forces.

4. As to Vossug-ed-Dowleh's enquiry concerning possible intention on our part to retire from Persia and leave her to be overrun, such remarks are both ungracious and uncalled for, and when made should be resented.

There is no intention to evacuate or withdraw to Indian frontier, and expert military opinion is to effect that troops now in the country are well

¹ Nos. 385, 386, and 387.

² Not printed.

³ No. 388.

⁴ The shortened title used for inter-departmental conferences summoned when necessary by Lord Curzon to carry on the work of the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet which had been dissolved in Jan. 1919.

able to maintain themselves. Nor are we able to understand why a country with 10 millions of people, even if it be Persia, should submit to be conquered by a few thousand armed bandits from the outside.

I must also point out that, while object of His Majesty's Government in concluding Anglo-Persian Agreement of August last was the joint benefit of both countries, we undertook no obligation to defend the present frontiers of Persia against all attack. We accepted a moral obligation to do our best on Persia's behalf, and this we are doing and shall continue to do. But Persian Government should realise that agreement was not a mere one-sided instrument. They have already derived great benefit from it, as but for its conclusion their position would have continued as precarious as was the case two years ago.

While, therefore, we are keeping such troops as possible in the country, and are furnishing all available officers as advisers, and munitions, &c., we cannot be subjected to perpetual whines and complaints that Persian Government are being left in the lurch.

As regards Starosselski and Cossack division, it is realised that his dismissal or expulsion is out of the question. Neither do we wish to see him here as suggested in your telegram No. 141 of 19th March.⁵ The third alternative mentioned by you, viz., reduction of force to numbers that can be maintained on the Persian Government's subsidy of 60,000 toman, seems to us to be wisest course, even though the discharged men may prove a difficulty.

On question of command of Caspian there is consensus of opinion that this would be of utmost benefit were it feasible. Admiralty, however, refuse definitely to entertain proposition unless guaranteed a base, for which military authorities have not and are not likely to have the necessary troops.⁶ Colonel Stokes,⁷ who has urged the opposite case, failed to carry conviction.

As regards Shiraz, while giving full weight to views of Military Commission, we are not prepared to delay withdrawal of troops from Fars, which has been decided upon for a year past, and which there appears to be no sufficient reason again to postpone.

With reference to your telegram No. 120,⁸ there is no objection to despatch by Persian Government of agent to Bolshevik headquarters at Gumbad-i-Kabus or Karasu in order to ascertain their intentions.

Repeated to India.

⁵ In this telegram (not printed) Sir P. Cox had suggested that he should be instructed to inform Col. Starosselski that, learning that the Military Commission had recommended that the South Persia Rifles and Cossack Division should become part of the regular Persian Army under the orders of the Ministry of War, 'H.M.G. realise that Starosselski's position has become difficult and they invite him to come forthwith to England where Your Lordship can discuss with him personally best means of satisfying interests of himself and . . . of those of his officers who do not wish or may not be required to serve under new régime'.

⁶ See No. 373.

⁷ Col. Stokes, British Political Officer at Baku, had arrived in England on March 11.

⁸ Of March 11, not printed.

No. 396

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 154 Telegraphic [186884/150/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 24, 1920, 4 p.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 143 and 144 of 21st March:¹ Tariff.

Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs is temporarily absent in France and I cannot consult him. His view as explained here was that his Government would be exposed to criticism and attack by other foreign legations if tariff were integral part of an Anglo-Persian exchange of notes.

This seems to receive confirmation from your telegram No. 144.

If, however, you remain convinced that no alteration would tend to avoid or mitigate such attacks and Persian Prime Minister is prepared to uphold matter *vis-à-vis* of other foreign missions, I will not press matter further.

(Repeated to India.)

¹ Nos. 394 and 393 respectively.

No. 397

The Earl of Derby¹ (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received April 1)

No. 388 Telegraphic by bag [189321/150/34]

PARIS, March 30, 1920

The Shah of Persia asked me to go and see him this morning to discuss a personal matter.² After stating with much earnestness his desire to act thoroughly loyally with the British Government, he proceeded to tell me that the Government of Teheran was behaving in a very unfriendly manner towards him, and that he retained them in power because he understood that they were acceptable to the British Government and for that reason only. He then went on to tell me of the difficulties he was encountering with regard to his return to Persia, and gave me to understand that the Persian Government was putting every obstacle in his way. He at last came to the point which he wished to discuss with me, and that was ways and means for his return journey, and also by which route he should return. It would appear there are two routes—one by the Caucasus and the other by Basra-Bagdad. He would prefer the former, not only on account of its being speedier, but also for climatic reasons, but he could not go that way unless the British Government authorised his doing so and guaranteed his safety. With regard to the Bagdad route, he states that unless he can start for that route immediately, say within three weeks, it would be too hot for him to undertake the journey and he would have to postpone his return for six months, during which time he is afraid that, owing to his absence from Persia, Bolshevic [*sic*] tendencies now evident there would get the upper hand.

¹ H.M. Ambassador at Paris.

² Cf. No. 387, n. 6.

With regard to expenses, he says that whichever route he goes the journey will cost four hundred thousand francs which sum he wishes the British Government to instruct Persian Government to send to Prince Firouz in Paris, to be expended for this purpose; but if he goes by Bagdad he would require a much larger sum, because he would have to visit sacred places and incur great expenditure. He instanced the fact that his great-grandfather made the pilgrimage and spent on it something like ten million francs, and he says though he wants nothing like that amount, it would be impossible for him to pay these visits without loss of prestige unless he had one million francs to spend on the pilgrimage. What he would prefer would be that some of the Teheran Ministers should meet him at Bagdad, that they should have control of the expenditure, and expend such money as they thought fit and necessary at the holy places, thereby relieving him of all responsibility. He said he could get no answers to his telegrams from Teheran, and he therefore impressed upon me the necessity of the British Government taking the matter in hand and directing him as to which route he is to take and at the same time to give the necessary instructions through our Minister at Teheran to the Persian Government as to money supplies. Owing to the near approach of the hot season, the matter is very urgent, and he begged me to request that your Lordship should give immediate attention to his wishes and instruct him and the Persian Government as to what your wishes are, and at the same time telegraph to Teheran asking Persian Government to give effect to your wishes as regards monetary supplies.

No. 398

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 2¹)

No. 161 Telegraphic [189537/150/34]

TEHRAN, April 1, 1920¹

Following Cabinet changes are taking place.

His Highness Sarum ed Dowleh, Minister of Finance and Sipandar [Sipahdar] Minister of War retire from Cabinet. Former takes provincial Governorship and will be succeeded by present acting Foreign Minister Ittila ul Mulk. Hishmet ed Dowleh, K.B.E., late Governor-General of Kerman probably becomes Minister of War. Simultaneously with announcement of these changes Prime Minister has issued long manifesto defending present policy, protesting against self-interested intrigues and blackmail, to which he has latterly been subjected from politicians out of work and professional intriguers; and while expressing hope to lay his record before Majlis at an early date he intimates his firm intention to take all necessary steps in the meantime to cope effectively with schemers attempting to hamper work of Government.

Repeated India, Bagdad circular to Consuls.

¹ The hours of despatch and receipt are not recorded.

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 2, 11.15 a.m.)

No. 162 Telegraphic [189580/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, April 1, 1920, 5.20 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Prime Minister's action therein indicated had my support.

For some time past his task has been rendered very difficult not only by opposition from political 'unemployed' outside Government but also owing to want of accord within Cabinet. (? Matters) came to head just before Naoruz² when in connection with one or two important questions which came before Council Prime Minister experienced organised and unlooked-for opposition from some of his Colleagues and was unable to carry through his proposals which were of pressing importance.

Realising that he could not continue in his post in these circumstances he discussed situation with me. To speak briefly he said that he was quite ready to resign if we wished it but could only remain if he had my staunch support in making such changes as he thought necessary to consolidate his position. His retention in office appearing to me of first importance at present juncture, I had no hesitation in giving him necessary assurances and am convinced that there was no alternative but action naturally³ taken by him. As regards Sarum ed Dowleh relations between him and Prime Minister, though outwardly correct, mainly owing to my continual efforts to prevent serious breach, had been fundamentally unsatisfactory for some months past. Prime Minister was dissatisfied with his conduct of Ministry of Finance and rightly or wrongly Sarum ed Dowleh's name was continually associated with intrigues against Prime Minister below the surface.

As regards Sipahdar an attempt to get up an agitation against the Prime Minister at Shah Abdul Ezim during Naoruz having miserably failed and Sipahdar having been apparently connected with this and other recent intrigues against Prime Minister, seeing that he had overreached himself made a clean breast of what he had been doing. His retirement was consequently unavoidable.

In both cases they have ostensibly sent in their resignations voluntarily.

As regards their respective successors Ittila-ul-Mulk is a quiet tactful man, with a reputation for honesty, who should prove a tractable collaborator with financial adviser.

Hishmet ed Dowleh has a good public reputation and reports of his co-operation with us at Kerman have been highly favourable. He has recently received K.B.E.

Foreign Office pending return of Nusret ed Dowleh will probably be in charge of Mansur ul Mulk at present chief of English branch of Cabinet. He is satisfactory from our point of view, and favourably regarded by other Legations as far as I know.

Repeated to India.

¹ No. 398.

² See No. 387, n. 4.

³ The text as sent read: 'of the nature'.

No. 400

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 5, 9.5 p.m.)

No. 166 Telegraphic [189813/150/34]

TEHRAN, April 2, 1920, 11.20 a.m.

Your telegram No. 154.¹

I explained position to Prime Minister who was also of opinion that wisest course was to go through with transaction on lines already contemplated.

Accordingly notes in terms approved by His Majesty's Government have been exchanged and tariff comes into operation from (? April 1st).

From technical point of view of trade interests Llewellyn-Smith will be in best position to suggest arguments for meeting objections from other Powers in case any should be put forward.

From political standpoint I venture to record following² for what they are worth.

1. Intention of the two Governments to revise tariff was announced in body of Anglo-Persian agreement published in August last. Neither French nor other Governments (except perhaps American) raised any objection in this connection.

2. Present transaction is merely a revision of tariff agreed upon in convention of 1903 and not a new treaty. Other Governments were not consulted in 1903: there is no reason why they should have been now.

3. French Government have in connection with agreement of August, 1919, repeatedly asserted their disinterestedness in regard to Persia, so that they have no ground for raising difficulties unless there is differentiation against French which there is not.

4. The only Power whose trade is prejudiced is Russia. She cannot complain of revision of tariff, because in connection with Mixed Financial Commission of 1916 Russia and Great Britain jointly agreed to examine and revise tariff in favour of Persia.

5. As regards Belgium. Expert Belgian Customs officials have been occupied in study and revision of tariff on the part of Persia in connection with recent negotiations and they have assured Belgian Minister that new tariff contains nothing to which Belgium has cause to object.

Sent to India.

¹ No. 396.

² The text as sent read: 'following observations'.

No. 401

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 6, 11.45 a.m.)

No. 179 Telegraphic [190137/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, April 5, 1920, 10.40 a.m.

Prime Minister sent to me [Acting] Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day April 4th to show me two telegrams received respectively from Persian

Minister for Foreign Affairs in London and Said Zia in Baku.¹ They draw attention to recent Bolshevik successes and liveliness of Bolshevik menace, and urge upon him desirability of stimulating² Russians of old régime from . . .³ and secondly the expediency of making clear in some way to Bolshevik leaders what attitude of Persia towards them is, namely that, provided that Bolsheviks refrain from aggression and intrusion, and cease inflammatory propaganda in Persia, latter has no aggressive designs against them.

Either on their suggestion or his own (I am not sure which) Prime Minister said that he thought it might be wise to send a mission or a representative to Soviet leaders for above purpose, and my views were asked on the suggestion. I replied that it was most important that Persian Government should proceed with great caution in this matter, and in frank consultation with His Majesty's Government; that the position was undoubtedly delicate and it would be a great pity if Persian Government, by taking any action without fully consulting us, were to give any wrong impression to His Majesty's Government.

I said I hesitated to advise and thought best course was for Prime Minister to communicate his ideas to Nusret and instruct him to consult His Majesty's Foreign Office.

Sent to India.

¹ Tabatabai Sayyid Zia-ud-Zin was Persian Commissioner in the Caucasus.

² The text as sent read: 'the exit of'.

³ The text received was here uncertain; as sent it read: 'Persia'.

No. 402

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 10, 10.45 a.m.)

No. 189 Telegraphic [191064/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, April 9, 1920, 11.30 a.m.

Prime Minister informs me that Shah's movements are under discussion with His Majesty's Government and asks me to communicate with Your Lordship on the subject.

According to latest information it is understood that His Majesty is likely to leave Marseilles towards the end of April by British cruiser for Bombay or Basra direct. This arrangement will bring him through the Gulf and Mesopotamia in June when heat will be extremely 'pénible' for a man of his build and even dangerous, apart from inconvenience to our officials involved in his passage through during the height of hot weather. On the other hand the Prime Minister is of opinion that Shah's return now will greatly prejudice the situation here and that he himself will not be able to remain in office. Question of Shah's coming or not coming really turns on question as to supplies of funds. His Majesty took 120,000 Tomans of Government money with him and has had 5,000,000 francs since but has been continually pressing for more, and Persian Government has not had it to give. I agree that it would be much in our common interests if he remained away until autumn

and both Prime Minister and I would be relieved if His Majesty's Government could suggest to His Majesty, or get his medical advisers to suggest, that, Caucasus route not being feasible, and Persian Gulf route being dangerously hot at this season, it might be better for him to remain until the autumn. He will then raise the question of funds and we can see what is best bargain that can be made with him by or on behalf of Persian Government. Kindly inform me what action is considered (? advisable).¹

¹ The text as sent read: 'possible'.

No. 403

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 10, 9.20 a.m.)

No. 190 Telegraphic [191109/150/34]

TEHRAN, April 9, 1920, 12.15 p.m.

Military Commission have now completed their report¹ which thanks to tactful handling and conciliatory spirit shown by both sides, has been signed unanimously by all British and Persian Members. It consists of seven chapters, first five deal with examination of existing conditions, chapter six details proposed organisation and chapter seven action to be taken to give effect to the scheme. Briefly recommendations are as follows:—

1. Existing Military Forces such as S[outh] P[ersia] R[ifles], Cossack Division, Gendarmerie etc. to be formed into one uniform army under the Ministry of War. Commission do not recommend Persian Government taking over Khorasan and Seistan Levy Corps as they stand with their present organisation.

2. Organisation of Headquarters at Teheran under British Organizer-in-Chief with two branches Military and Finance. Former branch being organised generally on British lines latter to deal with pay audit and purchase.

3. Persia to be divided into seven military areas.

4. Total forces to be raised eventually amount to approximately seventy thousand men of all arms. Detailed establishments of all units are included in the report.

5. Military schools for education of Persian Officers to be established.

6. Medical and veterinary services with schools of instruction to be formed.

7. Formation of an Air Service in close touch with any civil aviation which may be undertaken, establishment 6 flights modified to suit local conditions.

As the cost of the whole scheme is more than Persia can afford at present Commission recommend that the re-organisation according to the scheme be undertaken gradually, the following being the first steps to be undertaken.

A. Re-organisation of the War Office on a reduced scale.

B. Establishment of a Cadet School.

C. Organisation of 5 areas with less troops than proposed for the final

¹ This report (not printed) was dated April 4.

scheme remaining areas to have small staff to enable War Office to control them and to endeavour to reduce expenditure.

D. Commencement of an Air Force.

As regards requirements in British Officers and N.C.O.'s Commission recommend that regimental units be divided into 3 categories, viz.:

1. Those existing units to whom no British Officers or N.C.O.'s will be attached. These to be inspected by Officers attached to the staff of the G.O.C. of the area for the purpose.

2. Newly raised units to have three British Officers and four N.C.O.'s attached.

3. One Battalion one Cavalry Regiment and one Battery per area to form Monel [? model]² units and act as school for further training of Officers and N.C.O.'s. The Infantry Regiments to have seven British Officers and fourteen N.C.O.'s each, other arms in proportion.

As regards staffs, War Office and Areas Commission recommend that British and Persian Officers be mixed. A British Officer to be Organizer-in-Chief and each area to be commanded by a British Officer. Officers will also be required for the cadet school medical and other auxiliary services. British Officers to be lent to the Persian Government for four year periods of service, N.C.O.'s period of service to be 2 years exclusive of journeys to and fro and period of leave at conclusion. Air Force personnel to be borrowed from His Majesty's Government and as Persians are trained gradually to withdraw British personnel. Commission are unable to give initial cost of scheme owing to no information being available of prices of munitions stores etc. landed in Persia. Recurring annual cost of reduced scheme would be approximately 15 million Tomans and of complete scheme 25 million Tomans. The present cost of existing formations in Persia exclusive of Police is between 11 and 12 million Tomans annually.

Repeated India.

² The Tehran copy of this telegram is missing, so the wording of the text as sent cannot be checked.

No. 404

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 177 Telegraphic [188324/3921/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 9, 1920, 6 p.m.

Khoshtaria Concessions.¹

The Anglo-Persian Oil Company have acquired and are now sole legal owners of these concessions. They have been informed that His Majesty's

¹ A concession for oil was granted by the Persian Government in March 1916 to M. Khostaria (or Hochtaria) and a concession for minerals, at the same time, to Amir Nasres-Saltane, who appears to have transferred his rights to M. Khostaria.

Government will support them at Teheran with the object of obtaining recognition of transfer by Persian Government.

I am informing Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs² and you should so inform Persian Government.

² In a letter of April 15, not printed.

No. 405

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 426 Telegraphic: by bag [189321/150/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 9, 1920¹

Your telegram No. 388 of 30th March.²

I understand from Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the financial aspect of question raised by the Shah has now been satisfactorily settled with the Persian Prime Minister. As to the Shah's return to Persia, it has been decided, in consultation with Prince Firuz and with concurrence of Persian Prime Minister, that the Shah and his suite should return by the Persian Gulf and Bagdad. Arrangements are being made here for the party to travel by a P. and O. boat which leaves Marseilles on 1st May.

¹ The hour of despatch is not recorded.

² No. 397.

No. 406

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 85 [191069/150/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 10, 1920

Sir,

On the afternoon of the 8th April the Persian Foreign Minister called upon me for what I understood was to be a final interview before his departure on the following day. In the course of our conversation it appeared that this was by no means certain, and indeed he left me with little doubt in my own mind that his final appearances, of which this was by no means the first, would still continue to be almost as indefinitely protracted as were those of the late Mr. Sims Reeves.¹ On this occasion there were three special questions which the Minister desired to put to me.

The first was what view would I take of American participation in the financial and economic recovery of Persia.

I said that my reply would depend entirely upon the nature of the projects which he or the Americans might have in view. When the American Chargé d'Affaires had called upon me a few months ago on his way out to Tehran, and I had told him that by our agreement we were far from desiring to create any monopoly of British employment in Persia, he had replied that all that

¹ (1818-1900). A leading English tenor.

the American Government might require would be the appointment of two or three persons here or there to this or that Department of the Persian Administration; and to this I had rejoined that supposing them to be competent, there could not be any possible objection. Was this the kind of American assistance, I asked, that the Persian Government now had in view or did they contemplate anything wider?

The Minister rather startled me by alluding, though in somewhat vague terms, to big financial schemes for the development of the resources of Persia—agriculture, mines, railways and the like—and incidentally at the end of his explanation dropped in the word oil.

I at once realised that he was referring to the American Standard Oil Company, and that that omnivorous organisation was endeavouring to secure a foothold on Persian soil. I said that as to these larger undertakings I could not give an opinion except upon any concrete case that was put before me, but I warned him very strongly against any attempt to introduce the Standard Oil Company in Persia, assuring him that this would mean a competition which would be a source of certain trouble in the future and which the British Government could not be expected to regard with any favour.

His Highness then proceeded somewhat to startle me again by asking me whether I favoured the idea of the Persian Government entering into direct relations with the Soviet Government of Russia and concluding a treaty with them.

I asked why this was necessary and for what it was intended.

He replied that as every Government and State on the outskirts of Russia appeared to be entering into such negotiations, Persia thought that she might do so as well, and he did not imagine that we should raise any objection. Indeed had I not already at an earlier stage suggested that his Government should enter into communication with the Bolshevik forces who were threatening Persia on the Khorasan frontier by sending someone to Gumbad-i-Kabus to enquire as to their intentions?²

I said that this was a very different matter. Any Government which was threatened by a hostile force, with whom it was not at war, upon its frontier was entitled to demand an explanation and to shape its own action accordingly; but that if his suggestion meant that the Persian Government should send representatives to Moscow or elsewhere to enter into formal relations with the Soviet Government, this was a matter on which I could not possibly give any favourable advice to the Persian Government and which I could not recommend them to pursue except on their own responsibility. I was indeed rather painfully impressed by the fact that whereas the Persian Government had recently made an agreement with us, which we were doing our best to carry out, Persia now appeared to be running about in every direction trying to make herself secure by all sorts of arrangements with other people. One day it was a treaty with Azerbaijan and another day a financial arrangement with the Americans, and now it was a proposal to come to terms with the Soviet Government. Such an attitude seemed to be questionable, and I was somewhat surprised at its being advocated by the Persian Minister.

² See No. 395.

The third point of our conversation related to the enquiry which I had recently made of the Persian Government whether and in what form they proposed to submit the Anglo-Persian Agreement to the Mejlis before we communicated its text to the League of Nations.³ I had always taken the view that the Agreement would be accepted without demur and indeed very likely without discussion by the Council of the League if they were informed that it had already been approved by the Persian Parliament. But that if it had not been so communicated, a somewhat inconvenient position might arise if the Council of the League requested that it should.

The Minister replied to me by a series of arguments of a somewhat obscure and, as it appeared to me, in places, casuistical character, which required a greater knowledge than I possessed of the Persian Constitution to enable me to understand. He appeared at one moment to suggest that it was not necessary to refer the agreement for confirmation to the Persian Parliament at all because it had already been signed and was in operation. At another moment he indicated the main objection to such a reference to be that the Persian Parliament would be in a position to take it clause by clause and line by line, to put inconvenient questions, to move disagreeable amendments, and in fact to imperil the existence of the Agreement.

Accordingly he asked my opinion as to the suggestion that when the Mejlis assembled the Persian Government should invite a general discussion upon Foreign Affairs which would doubtless cover the Agreement, and take a vote of confidence in the Government at the close, which might be held to involve an approval of the Agreement. Those parts of the Agreement which related to financial, administrative and fiscal matters, by all of which Persia was obviously the gainer, could then be submitted separately and would undoubtedly meet with general approval because no one wished to turn them down.

I said that it was not for me to give an opinion upon the manner in which the Persian Government should meet their Parliamentary or Constitutional difficulties. They must act as they thought fit and must assume the entire responsibility. For my part I only wanted to be put in a position where I could say to the League of Nations, not merely that the Agreement had been concluded between our two Governments, but that it had the approval of the representative Assemblies of both nations. It was for the Persian Government to decide in what way this end could best be secured.

I am, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

³ See No. 391.

*Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)**No. 182 Telegraphic [190658/150/34]**FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 11, 1920, 6 p.m.*Your telegrams No. 179 of 5th April¹ and No. 183 of 8th April.²

When I stated in my telegram No. 153³ that there was no objection to Persian Government sending agent to Gumbad-i-Kabus to ascertain intentions of local Bolshevik forces who appeared to be threatening invasion of country, I contemplated no more than interchange of communications or assurances such as those suggested in your telegram No. 179. It is a very different thing when Persian Government seriously propose despatch of envoys to conclude a formal treaty with Soviet Government. That this is in their mind is apparent from a statement communicated by Firuz Mirza to the 'Times' of 6th April to the following effect:—

'It had always to be remembered how much Persia has suffered from the old Imperial policy of Russia, and that the Bolshevik Government, soon after its establishment, approached Persia in a friendly spirit and officially confirmed its resolution to abolish all treaties, conventions and all sorts of concessions injurious to that country.⁴ If, however, a new policy on the part of Persia towards Russia has been postponed, it was in view only of the uncertainty of the Russian situation. In taking the steps indicated Persia is only doing what all the other countries surrounding Russia have already done.'

I need hardly add that there is no analogy between case of Persia and border States of Finland and Baltic, or even of Caucasus. Prince Firuz broached same idea in a conversation with me on 8th instant, and asked my advice.⁵

I said that I could not myself encourage any such idea. Persian Government must act upon their own responsibility, and it was not my business to impose veto upon their action, but I could not view with sympathy spectacle of Persia running round for other alliances and arrangements at moment when she was beginning to reap first fruits of Anglo-Persian Agreement. Great Britain was about to open commercial negotiations with Soviet,⁶ and cessation of Bolshevik hostilities in East would be much more likely to result from a successful arrangement, if this could be concluded, than from sporadic treaties by other Powers.

You will realise, what I did not add, that under cover of a treaty Bolshevik agents and propaganda directed against Great Britain might easily find a secure foothold in the country.

(Repeated to India.)

¹ No. 401.² Not printed. See No. 409 below, n. 4.³ No. 395.

⁴ For an English version of the note of Jan. 14, 1918, from M. Trotsky, Soviet Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to the Persian Minister at Petrograd which contained this communication, see N. S. Fatemi, *Diplomatic History of Persia 1917-1923* (New York, 1952), vol. i, p. 325.

⁵ See No. 406.⁶ See Vol. VIII, Introductory Note to Chap. III.

No. 408

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received April 13, 11.30 p.m.)

No. 465 Telegraphic [191579/150/34]

PARIS, April 13, 1920, 6.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 439.¹

I have seen Prince Ferouz and impressed upon him the desirability for reasons of health, that Shah should postpone his departure till after hot weather. He himself quite agrees to this and will endeavour to persuade Shah to act accordingly.

He mentioned financial requirements. I impressed upon him that it would be desirable, before more money is asked for, that Shah should reduce retinue he has got here, with large expenditure that is thereby incurred. He has undertaken to see that this is done.

¹ Of April 11, not printed.

No. 409

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 15, 11.5 a.m.)

No. 201 Telegraphic [192007/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, April 14, 1920, 8.45 a.m.

Your telegram No. 182 of April 11th.¹

Prime Minister states that, as far as he was concerned, there was never any idea of concluding a treaty with Soviet Government. He had not contemplated more than an understanding on the lines indicated in my telegram No. 179² and . . .³ had instructed Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, from whom suggestion emanated, that he could consult with your Lordship and act accordingly. He had not consulted United States either in regard to Reuter telegram referred to in my telegram No. 183⁴ or statement in 'Times' of April 6th,⁵ and he asked me to assure (? you) that he had no intention of acting in any way independently of the advice and concurrence of His Majesty's Government in this matter.

Meanwhile he states that he has received a further telegram from Persian Commissioner in the Caucasus, in which latter observes that at present the attitude of Bolshevik elements towards Persia is hostile, and they think that Persia is hostile to them, and he emphasises the urgent expediency of issuing a communiqué, which will reach Bolshevik leaders by wireless, explaining the

¹ No. 407.

² No. 401.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'in any case'.

⁴ In this telegram of April 8 (not printed) Sir P. Cox stated that in Reuter's news received on March 7 the following passage had occurred: 'It is understood that Persian Foreign Minister is considering plan to establish good understanding between Persia and Soviet Government in Russia, which has already declared its intention of abolishing all treaties and concessions injurious to Persia.'

⁵ See No. 407.

attitude of Persia. Hitherto the Reuter message above referred to has been suppressed. Prime Minister would be grateful (supposing that your Lordship thinks that a communiqué either on the lines of above Reuter telegram or in some other form would be innocuous) if you would indicate terms which would be unobjectionable in the eyes of His Majesty's Government.

Sent to India.

No. 410

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received April 15, 11.15 p.m.)

No. 474 Telegraphic [192078/150/34]

PARIS, April 15, 1920, 8.25 p.m.

My telegram No. 468.¹

Prince Firouz represents that Shah of Persia is still obstinately set upon returning to Persia. He declares that if British Government put obstacles in the way it will be proof to him that they want to get rid of him. He alternately says he will abdicate and that he will ask French or Americans to convey him home. Prince Firouz's decided view is that it would be better to let Shah go as arranged about May 1st. His Majesty is ready to disembark at Bushire if there are reasons why he should not go through Mesopotamia. Shah pays no heed to account of difficulties of such a journey at this season.

¹ Of April 14, not printed.

No. 411

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 189 Telegraphic [189484/150/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, April 15, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 166 of 2nd April:¹ Revision of tariff.

French Ambassador states in official note that instructions have been sent to French Minister at Tehran to express surprise at sudden introduction of new customs tariff without previous notice to them or other Governments interested and to ask for delay in application of tariff in order to give other Governments time to make their observations.²

I have replied that the intention to revise tariff contained in 1903 convention was announced in agreement of August last,³ that we have merely revised 1903 tariff and not concluded a new treaty, and that Sir H. L. Smith kept the French Minister fully informed of negotiations and explained steps specially taken to safeguard interests of French trade.⁴

¹ No. 400.

² This note of April 1 is not printed.

³ See No. 363, n. 2.

⁴ In a letter of March 4 to M. Bonin, the French Minister at Tehran.

No. 412

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 194 Telegraphic [192007/150/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 17, 1920, 11.40 a.m.*

Your telegram No. 201 of 14th April:¹ Relations with Soviet.

No statement seems desirable in present circumstances.

¹ No. 409.

No. 413

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received April 18, 6.30 p.m.)

No. 480 Telegraphic [192478/150/34]

Secret

PARIS, *April 18, 1920, 2.50 p.m.*

My telegram No. 479.¹

I have seen Shah who, in presence of Prince Ferouz, gave me most categorical assurance he would support present Persian Prime Minister, and would also loyally adhere to Anglo-Persian agreement. I have seen Mr. Churchill² who undertakes to make all arrangements for return journey of Shah, who I have told, must recognize he makes journey at his own risk. Mr. Churchill returns to London immediately.³

¹ Of April 17, not printed.

² Mr. G. P. Churchill, a member of the Central European and Persia Department and formerly Secretary in H.M. Legation at Tehran. Lord Curzon, in his telegram No. 464 of April 16, despatched after receipt of Sir P. Cox's telegram No. 189 (No. 402), had informed Lord Derby that he had 'instructed Mr. George Churchill to proceed to Paris April 17 to explain situation to the Shah in view of his personal knowledge of local conditions. Should H.M. prove obdurate he will undertake journey at his own risk.'

³ This telegram was repeated by the Foreign Office as No. 201 to Tehran on April 19.

No. 414

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 22, 9.20 a.m.)

No. 219 Telegraphic [193353/202/34]

TEHRAN, *April 21, 1920, 5.50 p.m.*

When your telegram No. 201 of April 19th¹ reached me a telegram was on the point of despatch to your Lordship to the following effect:

As reported in my telegram No. 155 of March 28th,² Prime Minister had telegraphed urgently to the Shah explaining situation as regards Cossack division and urging His Majesty to telegraph to Starosselski calling upon him to conform to such measures as Government deemed necessary. Instead of complying Shah telegraphed to Prime Minister that he wished matter to

¹ See No. 413, n. 3.

² Not printed.

await his return; and Prime Minister informs me that His Majesty also telegraphed to Starosselski asking after his well being and expressing his entire satisfaction, now as heretofore, with devotion of Cossack division. This of course only served to stimulate Starosselski in his intrigues and his efforts to play out the time. Prime Minister accordingly asked me to request on his behalf that present altered aspect of Cossack division with a Soviet Government behind it should be explained to the Shah, and urgent importance be impressed upon him of supporting proposals of Government under the advice of joint Commission, for merging Cossack division and South Persia Rifles (as all along contemplated) into national uniform force. He asked further that unless Shah agreed to telegraph to the Prime Minister concurring in necessary steps being taken, and to Starosselski calling on him to recognise position and co-operate, facilities for journey and continuance of subsidy should be refused to His Majesty.

Position is now somewhat altered by Shah's general assurances and by our undertaking to arrange for his journey; but I hope that it will still be possible to ask him to make good his professions and send desired telegrams.

If he refuses we shall be justified in doing the necessary before he returns; if he complies we can similarly go ahead but with less trouble.

Prime Minister also expressed view that it was undesirable that His Majesty should travel through Mesopotamia, as it would be out of the question from religious point of view for him to do so without visiting the Holy Places, and he would be very liable to be got at while there by elements opposed to our rule in Mesopotamia and opposed to agreement. He strongly advocates his travelling either by car to Meshed and thence by road or *via* Bushire, Shiraz and Ispahan.³

Sent to India.

³ In his telegram No. 212 of April 24 (not printed) Lord Curzon replied: 'We entirely agree on desirability if possible of avoiding visit to Mesopotamia and consequent expenses at Holy Places. If therefore Persian Prime Minister and yourself are satisfied that route from Bushire *via* Shiraz is feasible, there is no objection at this end to such procedure.'

No. 415

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 490 Telegraphic [193353/202/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 24, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Sir P. Cox's telegram No. 219 of 21st April:¹ Shah's journey, reference in which should be to your Lordship's telegram No. 480 of 18th April.²

Any encouragement of General [*sic*] Starosselski by the Shah in present circumstances is greatly to be deprecated. It would therefore be of great utility if your Lordship could see His Majesty and induce him, in view of his recent assurances, to send a telegram as advocated by Sir P. Cox in antepenultimate paragraph of his above-mentioned telegram.

¹ No. 414.

² No. 413.

Should you not be able to see the Shah, you will doubtless address Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, and press him to obtain His Majesty's assurance in the matter.

Shah's journey *via* Meshed appears impracticable for various reasons. Question of Bushire route is at present engaging our consideration.

(Repeated to Tehran, No. 211.)

No. 416

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received April 26, 9 p.m.)

No. 503 Telegraphic [194231/202/34]

Secret. Urgent

PARIS, April 26, 1920, 5.50 p.m.

I have this morning seen the Shah and communicated to him the substance of your telegram No. 490.¹ He explained that telegram sent to General [*sic*] Starosselski was in response to a telegram of good wishes on New Year's day. He adhered to his decision that matter in question must remain in abeyance till his return to Teheran. I pressed him as much as I possibly could, and at last he consented to say that he would send a telegram to Prime Minister agreeing in principle to proposal,² but he said that General [*sic*] Starosselski must not be informed of such a telegram. He was very obstinate and determined, and though I pointed out to him that notwithstanding his professions of loyalty to England he refused, on first occasion that he was asked to give a proof of his feelings, to conform to British views, he maintained his objections. I afterwards had a talk with Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs and he is going again to talk to Shah on the subject, but without much hope of securing success.³

With reference to Shah's journey please telegraph to me immediately what definite arrangements have been made for him. Shah leaves here on evening April 28th and had telegraphed to his Government that he was returning by Bagdad which you now state is impracticable.

Apparently only route open is by Bushire and Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs points out that if Shah is to arrive there proper arrangements must be made for his reception both by Military and Civil authorities, and that there is not much time left in which to make these arrangements. Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs presses for an answer by mid-day tomorrow.

¹ No. 415.

² In his telegram No. 261 of May 10 (not printed) Sir P. Cox reported that up to the time of his departure from Marseilles the Shah had not sent 'any telegram in the sense desired either to Starosselski or Prime Minister'.

³ In a letter dated April 27 to Sir E. Crowe (not printed) Lord Derby reported that Prince Firuz had 'had nearly two hours' talk with the Shah' but had been 'unable to move him'.

No. 417

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 220 Telegraphic [194231/202/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *April 27, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Lord Derby's telegram No. 503 (of 26th April.¹ Shah's attitude regarding Cossack Division and his return to Persia).

In view of Shah's obstinate attitude, there appears no harm in action being taken as anticipated in penultimate paragraph of your telegram No. 219 (of 21st April).²

¹ No. 416.

² No. 414. In his reply (Tehran telegram No. 236 of April 29, not printed), Sir P. Cox said that the Persian Prime Minister was temporarily indisposed, but that he would 'discuss plans with him as soon as possible'.

No. 418

Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby¹ (Cairo) to Earl Curzon
(Received May 8, 5 p.m.)

No. 449 Telegraphic [196820/150/34]

CAIRO, *May 7, 1920, 2.15 p.m.*

Following from Mr. Norman² begins:

'On May 3rd the Shah spontaneously gave me most categorical assurances of his complete loyalty to Anglo-Persian agreement, of his determination to effect transfer of Cossack division to British control immediately on his return to Teheran, of his intention to maintain present Cabinet in power so long as it is agreeable to His Majesty's Government, and in general to conform to the wishes of the latter in every respect.

'I will report by despatch on my arrival at Teheran.'³

Repeated to India and Tehran.

¹ H.M. High Commissioner for Egypt.

² Mr. H. C. Norman, who had been appointed H.M. Minister at Tehran in Feb. 1920, was on his way to take up his post.

³ In his telegram No. 371 of June 11 (not printed) relating to his first audience with the Shah since his arrival in Tehran, Mr. Norman reported that the Shah had repeated the assurances given above.

No. 419

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received May 8, 9.10 a.m.)

No. 550 Telegraphic [196672/150/34]

PARIS, *May 7, 1920, 8.15 p.m.*

Prince Feirouz has just been to see me. He wishes me to remind you that you promised him that before the Turkish treaty was finally settled you would

consult with him on all matters which might affect Persia, notably the frontiers of Turkestan [Kurdistan].¹ He is much disturbed at seeing in the papers that the treaty has been completed and will be handed to the Turkish Government next week.² He hopes that he may receive assurance that matters in which Persia is directly interested have not yet been decided.

¹ In a letter of March 11 to Prince Firuz Lord Curzon had acknowledged the receipt of a note of Feb. 25 (not printed) forwarding 'a comprehensive memorandum' setting forth the desiderata of the Persian Government 'on the subject of the ratification of the western frontier of Persia in connection with the conclusion of the Treaty of Peace with Turkey'. He had informed the Prince that: 'When... the time comes for the Supreme Council to deal with the settlement of the border States or communities whose frontiers have still to be determined and whose territories will lie between Turkey and the Persian Empire, the Persian delegates will be afforded the opportunity desired by Your Highness of setting forth their country's case.' For previous correspondence on this subject see Vol. IV, Nos. 825, 845-6, 849, 854, 865, 871-2, and 877-8.

² See No. 61.

No. 420

*Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 8, 2.35 p.m.)*¹

No. 253 Telegraphic [196796/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, May 8, 1920, 2.35 p.m.¹

Your telegram No. 237.²

Financial Adviser³ strenuously maintains

- (a) That March and April advances cannot be charged legitimately to loan,⁴ which is available only for financial and military reforms subsequent to his nominal entrance upon duties on May 6th.
- (b) That His Majesty's Government, not Persian Government, postponed his arrival.
- (c) That obviously loan will not be sufficient to see necessary reforms through.
- (d) That he is not yet in a position to say, but it may be expected that Persian Government cannot carry on existing reforms without subsidy, therefore question of subsidy will arise in a more difficult form in May, for only legitimate charge against loan in May will probably be salaries of advisers.
- (e) He deprecates any brusque action tending to cause his arrival to become immediate source of embarrassment to Government he has been sent to help.

¹ It is not clear which of these times, if either, is correct.

² Of May 1, not printed; see n. 6 below.

³ Mr. Armitage Smith, Assistant Secretary in H.M. Treasury (see Vol. IV, No. 842), who had assumed his duties at Tehran on May 6 (see No. 430 below).

⁴ i.e. the advance of £2,000,000 to the Persian Government under the Anglo-Persian Agreement of Aug. 1919, for which see Vol. IV, No. 710.

I am entirely in agreement with Financial Adviser. I have in my telegram No. 241⁵ indicated basis on which further payments can reasonably be met and I beg that I may receive 'Clear the Line' instructions to pay May instalments which fall due on May 15th.

I cannot too earnestly urge that this and kindred questions may be approached not from point of view of Department[s] of State immediately concerned,⁶ but from that of policy of His Majesty's Government as a whole, which presumably requires that Anglo-Persian Agreement should be given best possible chance of establishing itself.

⁵ Of May 1, not printed.

⁶ i.e. the India Office and the Treasury, the former of which, according to Lord Curzon's telegram No. 237, saw 'little prospect of Government of India being able or willing to join in any further loan to Persian Government and consider—as is clearly right—that present loan should be made to last as long as possible'.

No. 421

Earl Curzon to the Earl of Derby (Paris)

*No. 537 Telegraphic [196672/150/34]**

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 8, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 550 of 7th May:¹ Persian claims and Turkish treaty.

At San Remo we specifically provided for consideration of the Persian territorial claims by wording of one of the articles relating to Kurdistan (not Turkestan as given in your telegram). According to that article a commission composed of British, French, Italian, Persian and Kurdish representatives shall visit the spot to examine and decide what rectifications, if any, should be made in Turkish frontier where, under provisions of present treaty, that frontier coincides with that of Persia.²

Question of reparation was not discussed at San Remo, but it is believed to have been provided for somewhere in the treaty.

Mr. Vansittart³ will doubtless be able to explain this point to your Excellency.

You may inform Prince Firuz accordingly.⁴

(Repeated to Tehran, No. 250.)

¹ No. 419.

² For this article see Vol. VIII, appendix to No. 5, and No. 8, minute 7 and n. 8.

³ Temporary head of the Political Section of the British Peace Delegation in Paris.

⁴ In his telegram No. 38 of May 15 (not printed) Mr. Vansittart reported a conversation in which he had explained to Prince Firuz the provision made for Persian claims in the Turkish treaty.

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 10, 9.30 a.m.)

No. 260 Telegraphic [196934/150/34]

TEHRAN, May 9, 1920, 10.35 a.m.

In my next following telegram¹ I am giving an appreciation of the situation here: Meanwhile I submit résumé of Bolshevik news of past two or three days.²

On May 6th Russian Officer Commanding Cossack detachment at Persian Astara, telegraphed that one Bolshevik torpedo boat and one destroyer had arrived with divisional Commander from Bolshevik headquarters who informed him that Bolsheviks intended to advance against English by sea and land and that unless Cossack detachment would join them, Bolshevik force must mop them up, as they could not allow them to remain in their rear. Further telegram followed on the 7th saying that Bolshevik Commander demanded that Cossack detachment should form an advance guard to Bolshevik force. Commandant of detachment added that his officers had been tampered with and if he remained longer in Astara he could not depend on his men. As in any case he was not strong enough to offer any useful resistance, he was informed that Bolshevik threats were probably bluff but that in case he should be seriously threatened he should evacuate his detachment and munitions towards Ardebil.

Above report received corrupt on the 7th from Persian Governor of Astara who said he had been summoned to Russian Astara to interview Bolshevik representative above mentioned who had informed him that Bolsheviks had no quarrel with Persians whom they regarded with friendly eyes but that British were their enemies and they intended to attack them.

On May 7th Intelligence Officer at Enzeli telegraphed report from reliable source that four Bolshevik transports and (? two) war-ships had arrived at Lenkoran and that 600 infantry and some artillery had been landed. Also that one ship with two long range naval guns and an armoured car had reached Russian Astara.

On May 8th Starosselski sent Prime Minister what purported to be news from Astara received by telegraph through Resht to the effect that tenth and eleventh Bolshevik armies were preparing for offensive against Georgia and Batoum: at this³ Entente Powers had concluded a treaty with Soviet under which they had recognized present Government of Russia: that Bolsheviks are about to claim rendition of vessels interned at Enzeli and evacuation of Northern Persia by British in conformity with provisions of convention of 1907.⁴ Ends.

(This latter looks like invention on the part of Starosselski.)

Repeated to India and Political (? officer) Baghdad for General Officer Commanding for information.

¹ Of May 10, not printed. See No. 416, n. 2.

² For telegrams reporting the Soviet Russian advance into Azerbaijan see Vol. XII, Nos. 548 and 550.

³ The text as sent read: 'Batoum; that Entente Powers . . . '.

⁴ The text of this Convention is printed in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 100, pp. 555-60.

No. 423

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 257 Telegraphic [196459/150/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 11, 1920, 6 p.m.*

While Bolsheviks may not perhaps infringe neutrality of Persia by active invasion, they will very possibly use every endeavour to inculcate Persians with their doctrines even though natural inclination of population be against them. Question is being considered whether some counter-measures might be taken now in order to avoid grave difficulties later. It has been suggested that Mr. Maclean¹ or a member of your staff might be specially charged to devise and apply measures in co-operation with Persian Government? I should be glad of your observations.²

¹ Mr. H. Maclean, Honorary Attaché to H.M. Legation at Tehran.

² On June 15 in response to a further telegram (No. 302 of June 4, not printed) from the Foreign Office Mr. Norman, Sir P. Cox's successor at Tehran, replied (Tehran telegram No. 384) that his predecessor had discussed this question with the Persian Prime Minister and obtained his approval of an organization on the lines suggested, but that the Cabinet crisis which had then developed rendered immediate action impossible.

No. 424

Earl Curzon to Mr. Alston¹ (Peking)

No. 180 Telegraphic [F 761/111/10]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 12, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 172² and my despatch No. 117.³

If Chinese Government recur to the subject you should merely inform them of terms of 1919 Treaty⁴ and of Grant's letter to Afghan delegates,⁵ and leave them to draw their own conclusions.

Any definite pronouncement as to the international status of Afghanistan is to be avoided at present.

Repeated to India.

¹ Mr. B. F. Alston had been appointed H.M. Minister at Peking on March 1, 1920.

² Of March 30, not printed.

³ See No. 377, n. 4.

⁴ See No. 377, n. 3.

⁵ Printed in Cmd. 324 of 1919 as No. 67. Sir H. Grant was the chief British representative on the delegation which met Afghan representatives at Rawalpindi in the summer of 1919 to enter upon preliminary negotiations for a treaty of friendship.

No. 425

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 14, 11.30 p.m.)

No. 271 Telegraphic [198025/150/34]

Very urgent. Clear the line

TEHRAN, *May 14, 1920, 1.20 p.m.*

Prime Minister desires me to place following before His Majesty's Government.

On Eastern frontier where Persia is in contact with Russian Bolsheviks

alone, and where latter are not at present in a very strong position, situation does not give lively cause for anxiety.

On North and West on the other hand we have to deal with a (? Turko-) Bolshevik combination which is much more menacing.

As regards centre i.e. Enzeli line, precise intentions of above (? combination) have not yet been disclosed but on the whole indication of intelligence reports up to date is that no serious intrusion on this line is at present contemplated.

As regards Persian frontier from Astara westward (? for the present)¹ Western frontier trouble is certainly to be expected, and as before stated principal danger spot is Persia and Azerbaijan² where conditions are already thoroughly bad. If this province succumbs [*sic*] or secedes by default of Central Government effect on general situation in Persia will be disastrous enough. Cabinet will certainly fall and policy including agreement will be jeopardised.

There is still some chance of saving situation (? if) following measures are taken at once, and to save it is urgently in our own interests as well as in those of Persian Government: but nothing can be done without considerable expenditure.

Prime Minister makes following propositions on hypothesis that His Majesty's Government are still not prepared under any circumstances to send any reinforcements of British troops to (? Persia).³

1. That garrison of gendarmes now at Ispahan should be withdrawn and replaced by detachment of South Persia Rifles from Kerman or failing that by a Bakhtiari⁴ garrison.

2. That gendarmes thus released plus Central Brigade and such other units as can be spared from capital to total number of 3,000 be sent urgently to Tabriz.

3. That to make up for this depletion at Centre Norperforce, whether it remains distributed between Kasvin and Enzeli or whether it be concentrated at Kasvin, be substantially reinforced from Bagdad sufficiently to enable it to deal effectively with any probable development from Enzeli and to maintain stability of situation at Teheran after Shah's return.

If these measures are taken at once Prime Minister is confident that he can keep general situation in hand and that Cossack problem can be settled finally by peaceable or forcible measures on Shah's return. If they are not taken he fears that unfavourable developments must supervene involving fall of present Government and he urges that His Majesty's Government which is also interested in saving situation find funds for time being Persia being charged with half cost of re-inforcing Norperforce and with whole cost of other measures, money to be recovered from Persia like other advances or by a

¹ The text as sent read: 'westwards to'.

² Amended on the filed copy to: 'Persian Azerbaijan', which was the wording in the text as sent from Tehran.

³ The text as sent read: 'Tabriz'.

⁴ i.e. a garrison recruited from the Bakhtiari tribes of south-west Persia.

fresh loan. He argues, and I agree, that failure to take measures to keep situation under control, will be shortsighted economy and that infinitely greater loss or expenditure will result from failure to do so.

He solicits urgent consideration and decision on the above.

Repeated to India, 271, Bagdad, 137, and N[orth] P[ersia] F[orce], by post.

No. 426

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 14, 6 p.m.)

No. 268 Telegraphic [197888/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, May 14, 1920, 2.35 p.m.

During the last few days dissemination of reports arriving from Baku and Astara and their exploitation by propagandists has resulted in a chorus of objectionable articles in vernacular press.

Some seek to find common ground between Bolshevism and Islam; some use Bolshevism as a peg for attacking Anglo-Persian Agreement; all are unanimous in asserting that our troops are immediate objective of Bolsheviks in Persia and demand or appeal for their withdrawal.

Even 'Raad' which has always been strongly in favour of Anglo-Persian Agreement and policy of present Cabinet now remains silent and has not courage to publish counterblast proffered by 'Times' correspondent and myself.

Their attitude is that it is all very well for us to be optimistic but they are faced with fact that there is a large Bolshevik army at Baku and only about 3,000 troops in Kasvin and Enzeli and that in absence of definite reassurances as to Bolshevik intentions or sure guarantees against Bolshevik intrusion they cannot take risk of publishing necessary counter article.

Only effective means of combating propaganda is for Reuter to telegraph something on lines indicated in my immediately following telegram *en clair*¹ or failing that to inform me that they agree to my issuing it, as a paragraph of their daily message as a summary of a paragraph in London 'Times'.

In this form it will become a basis for discussion in local papers, and public all over Persia will at all events see the other side of the shield.

Repeated to India and Bagdad.

¹ No. 427 below.

No. 427

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 14)¹

No. 269 Telegraphic [197889/150/34]

Extremely urgent

TEHRAN, May 14, 1920¹

Paper learns Teheran newspapers publishing articles in which it is sought to prove that principles of Bolshevism have much in common with teaching of pure Islam. Plurality wives and facility divorce quoted as examples

¹ The times of despatch and receipt are not recorded.

Islamic anticipation of Bolshevik tendencies. One paper proceeds to argue that Bolsheviks and Persians should properly be spiritual friends but Anglo-Persian Agreement constitutes barrier between them and the presence of British troops is a lively danger for Persia. Appeal is therefore made to Britain to withdraw them. Another paper without instituting comparisons between the prophet and Trotsky [*sic*]² makes same appeal and says that Russians believe the Anglo-Persian Agreement will subordinate Persian Foreign Policy to Great Britain, just as that of Afghanistan was formerly subordinated. Persian Public with such blind instructors is undoubtedly becoming considerably agitated. News from Baku and Ast[a]ra to the effect that Bolshevik objection³ in Persia is the British troops, are (? is) magnified into an ultimatum to Persia to choose between departure of the British and the horrors of a Bolshevik invasion. Similarly the undoubtedly unsatisfactory situation at Tabriz is magnified into the statement that Tabriz is ready to accept a Soviet Government. No one stops to reflect that the British troops by insisting in [*sic*] the disarmament and internment of Denekin's [*sic*] Caspian fleet at Enzeli saved Persia last month from the transference of the Russian Civil War to Persian soil, that Great Britain has encouraged Persia to enter into communication with the Bolsheviks,⁴ or that the Allies themselves are at the present moment negotiating with the Soviet.⁵ They are equally blind to the fact that the arrival of an Afghan envoy at Teheran⁶ shows that the Anglo-Persian Agreement permits the development of free and friendly relations between Persia and Afghanistan. The fact that for long the Bolsheviks have been on the trans-Caspian frontier where their bark has proved considerably worse than their bite also fails to warm Persian cold feet. The owners of property find themselves in a dilemma, they fear that the Bolshevik poison is working rapidly in the Persian populace, and though anxious to stave off Bolshevik invasion at any cost, they realise there is no force to fill the void which British troops would leave and they fear immediate internal anarchy. One owner of large estates who adds honesty and enlightenment to other disadvantages recently stated that he owed his life to the presence of British troops in the country. Moreover they realise that if British troops were withdrawn there would still remain in northern Persia the double attraction for the Bolsheviks of coming to grips with the Cossack Division, which the Bolsheviks regard as part of Denekin's forces and loyal Tsarist Organization, and of exploiting the rich grain producing provinces of Azerbaijan, Ghilan, Mazandaran and Khorasan. The report of the Anglo-Persian Military Commission still awaits the Cabinet's consideration and in the meantime nothing is done to provide Persia with her own force. The British financial adviser is ready to begin work but unless . . .⁷ into being and

² M. L. D. Trotsky, Soviet Russian Commissar for War.

³ The text as sent read: 'objective'.

⁴ Cf., e.g., No. 395, last paragraph, No. 406, and No. 407.

⁵ See Vol. VIII, Introductory Note to Chap. III, and Vol. XII, Chap. V.

⁶ See No. 378. The envoy had reached Tehran in April.

⁷ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'a Mejliss comes'.

interests itself in reform it is difficult to see what *point d'appui* is available either for him or for military or other advisers. British Public servants accustomed to a Parliamentary Régime do not relish the prolongation of a situation which in time would make them the instruments of an irresponsible junta.

No. 428

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 261 Telegraphic [196796/150/34]**

Most urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 14, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 253 of 8th May:¹ Financial assistance for Persia.

Treasury agree to full payment for May, half payment for June and quarter payment for July, if absolutely necessary, all on condition that India bears usual share.

After this no further payment can be made and you must rely on loan and local resources.

His Majesty's Government have publicly announced that in their opinion time for loans from Government to Government has passed and that no further loans of this kind will be made;² but they recognise that financial adviser must have a little time to conform to this policy, and they are willing for this reason to make above limited exception to policy announced by them to Parliament, but financial adviser must clearly understand that this is utmost concession that can be made and must frame his policy accordingly.

You will notice that above is conditional on Secretary of State for India accepting customary share. I have not yet received his decision, but will telegraph at the earliest possible moment.³ I fear, however, it cannot reach you on 15th May.

¹ No. 420.

² This announcement had been made on March 2, see 126 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 247.

³ Although the agreement of the India Office was not formally communicated to the Foreign Office until May 29, the Foreign Office in response to an urgent appeal from Sir P. Cox (Tehran telegram No. 291 of May 19, not printed) authorized payment of the May advance in its telegram No. 273 of May 20, not printed.

No. 429

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 262 Telegraphic [198688/4303/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 14, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Sir Charles Greenway¹ has personally discussed with Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs question of Anglo-Persian Oil Company's royalty and possible change from 16% to payment per ton. It is understood that Sir Charles Greenway's offer to Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs also included certain

¹ Chairman of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

participation in new issue of shares on which point Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs has pressed us repeatedly as question to which Persian Government attach great importance.² It is understood that Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs has telegraphed to Tehran urging acceptance of suggested payment per ton.

We cannot well exercise pressure on Financial Adviser who will doubtless judge matter on its merits. On the other hand a settlement of this question would certainly be of joint benefit.

Oil Company have received strong support from Sir J. Simon³ as regards their interpretation of the area over which 16% interest would be held to extend. They could moreover always avoid the difficulty by creation of subsidiary companies for their workings outside Persian territory. Their contention therefore is that Persian Government will not win in long run, even if they insist on the 16% basis.

Above is for your information and for use should matter be discussed in Teheran.

² Cf., e.g., Vol. IV, No. 865.

³ The eminent lawyer, formerly Home Secretary (1915-16).

No. 430

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 16, 11.40 a.m.)

No. 274 Telegraphic [198236/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, May 15, 1920, 12 noon

Financial Adviser took up his duties on May 6th and has since been making good progress.

He finds favour with the Prime Minister and Cabinet and is himself very satisfied so far with their readiness to cooperate and give favourable consideration to his recommendations.

So far therefore all is well at this end.

But after surveying financial situation and outlook here, he expresses doubt as to whether His Majesty's Government fully realise position and their own future commitments, contractual or moral.

He sums up the situations as follows:

First. (? Two) million loan¹ is definitely ear-marked for reforms and cannot be diverted without a breach of faith and (? so)² rendering impossible programme of reforms contemplated by agreement and essential to stabilisation of administration.

Primâ facie (? only) objects on which in his opinion loan should be expended, are:—

1. Salaries of advisers civil and military.
2. Military equipment, and

¹ Cf. No. 420, n. 4.

² The text as sent read: 'without (a) breach of faith and (b) rendering . . . '.

3. Such increases of (? establishment) as are clearly necessary in connection with reforms. (On civilian side reform will be in direction of reduction not increase.)

Adviser is working strenuously in devising schemes for reducing expenditure and increasing revenue but he cannot anticipate any appreciable increase of revenue before September at the earliest and meanwhile administration must be carried on.

He earnestly hopes, and I fully support him, that His Majesty's Government will be prepared to help Persia to tide over this period. To refrain from doing so will be either to stifle Anglo-Persian Agreement in its infancy or to oblige Persia to mortgage its last available resources to private creditors at ruinous rates of interest in order to survive period.

Sent to India.

No. 431

*Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 18)*¹

Unnumbered Telegraphic [198547/150/34]

Urgent. Personal and secret

TEHRAN, May 15, 1920¹

In last issue of monthly survey of political situation which foreign editor of 'Times' sends to their correspondent here latter is informed that² 'Anglo-Persian Agreement concluded by Sir P. Cox with three Anglophil Ministers and with regard to which Government of India was never consulted (*sic*) may be regarded as dead'.

As I said in course of correspondence (? with you)³ leading up to Agreement its conceivable destruction by wave of Bolshevism was a factor⁴ that none of us could legislate for: but as far as one can at present see ahead agreement will survive this present critical period if His Majesty's Government will give benevolent support to the infant. Apart from nervousness of Bolshevism⁵ I am confident that Agreement at all events in all essential particulars will stand. I do not fear Medjliss. It may be that to satisfy their *amour propre* they will ask for some unessential modifications such as insertion of a period but with good management and preparation of ground just before meeting of Parliament I should not apprehend more than this.

¹ The times of despatch and receipt are not recorded.

² In the text as sent the following additional words follow 'that': 'in Government circles in India the view prevails that'.

³ The text as sent read: 'with India'.

⁴ This word read 'contingency' in the text as sent.

⁵ The text as sent read: 'Apart from advance of Bolshevism'.

No. 432

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 267 Telegraphic [198236/150/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 18, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 274 (of 15th May).¹ Finances).

I desire to assure you and the Financial Adviser that His Majesty's Government are keenly alive to the grave difficulties in the way of financial reform.

While our expenditure in Persia during the last years of the war was of colossal dimensions, very appreciable reductions have since been made in all directions.

I therefore felt myself justified in emphasising strongly to Treasury and Secretary of State for India at Eastern Committee on May 17th how essential it is on political grounds to continue the monthly payments of Tomans 350,000 (irrespective of 1919 loan) till September next in spite of terms of my telegram No. 261 (of 14th May).²

I have good hopes that my representations will be successful, but I fear that above date is maximum period that can be entertained.

¹ No. 430.

² No. 428.

No. 433

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 268 Telegraphic [198025/150/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 18, 1920, 6.30 p.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 260,¹ 261² and 271³ (of May 9, 10, 14).

Military situation in North Persia was exhaustively examined at meeting of Eastern Committee yesterday. Firstly, His Majesty's Government are not in a position to augment their forces in Persia. Secondly, military authorities are on principle averse from maintaining separate detachments at distance from base, and from this point of view would like to withdraw troops from Tabriz and Enzeli. On other hand, serious political consequences of withdrawal, especially from Enzeli, have to be weighed. As regards Tabriz, there is no objection to release of gendarmes at Ispahan and their replacement by South Persia Rifles from Kerman, the forces thus released, plus any other units that can be thus spared, being despatched to Tabriz. It would be better not to place Bakhtiari garrison at Ispahan. If these arrangements can be carried out at once, withdrawal from Tabriz of the two British platoons will be deferred. Otherwise it would be unsafe to leave them there.

Position at Enzeli does not appear to be exposed to immediate danger either by land or sea, although such a danger would arise if its flank were turned. On other hand, hasty withdrawal of Enzeli force to Kazvin would

¹ No. 422.

² Not printed; cf. Nos. 416, n. 2, and 422, n. 1.

³ No. 425.

probably be regarded as invitation to Bolsheviks to advance and might imperil position in North Persia.

It was decided therefore to maintain force at Enzeli for the present, leaving it to the discretion of the General Officer Commanding to retire upon Kazvin should the Enzeli position be in real danger or should a larger force be required at Kazvin to deal with situation at Tehran. General Officer Commanding, Bagdad, is being consulted as to possibility of reinforcing Kazvin in latter contingency.

Your opinion is sought upon these proposals before actual instructions are issued.

Incidence of cost is being taken up with Treasury and India Office.⁴

⁴ In a minute to Lord Curzon dated May 20 (Confidential/General/363/19) Lord Hardinge, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, wrote as follows:

'I understand that the question has been raised by the War Office of the withdrawal of the British forces now at Kasvin and Tabriz to Kermanshah, and eventually to the railhead. I understand that these measures are to be followed by the immediate withdrawal of our troops from Batoum [cf. Vol. XII, No. 573]. I would like to point out to you some of the consequences of these measures, of which you are as well aware as I am.

'I will deal in the first instance with the evacuation of Batoum, for although I understand the withdrawal from that port is to be consequent upon the evacuation of Northern Persia, still the effect throughout the Middle East will perhaps be even greater than that of the earlier withdrawals. Once the Allied troops have left Batoum, Georgia will be deprived of any further moral or material support, and there is little doubt that she will, in the course of a few weeks, throw in her lot with the Bolsheviks and blame us for having betrayed her. This reproach will be well deserved. As for Armenia, with the Bolsheviks in Azerbaijan, the Turks in the south-west, and the Georgians in a hesitating frame of mind, there is little doubt that the Erivan Government, which is already accused of extreme tendencies, will in the end become Bolshevik. This will facilitate greatly the approach of the Bolshevik troops from Baku to Persia through Tiflis and Erivan to the railhead at Tabriz. The whole of the Caucasus will then have become Bolshevik, and it is not unlikely that Mustapha Kemal [*sic*] will join hands with them with a view to driving the French out of Cilicia and ourselves from Mosul, although the latter operation would take some very considerable time owing to its distance from Mustapha's base. Still there is the whole summer before him, and with a strong Bolshevik hold upon the Caucasus there is no saying how far, and in what direction, Mustapha Kemal and the Bolshevik forces might be able to act.

'It is true that our force at Tabriz is a negligible quantity, but it had been proposed to strengthen it by the despatch of a force from Ispahan. The withdrawal of the British force from Tabriz to Kermanshah will give the Bolsheviks a free railhead and will enable them to pour in troops *via* Tabriz on the main road to Kasvin.

'The troops at Enzeli have already been withdrawn [see No. 434 below], and I should imagine from my knowledge of that road that they will retire to Menjil, where there is a strong strategic position which they would probably be able to hold after destroying the bridge across the river. If, however, the troops are to be withdrawn from Kasvin the position would no longer be tenable.

'Once the evacuation of Tabriz and Kasvin has been effected the fall of Tehran is inevitable, but before that happens the Government of Vossuk-ed-Dowleh will have disappeared. The Anglo-Persian Agreement will have become a scrap of paper, the Europeans of Tehran will be obliged to fly towards the south, and anarchy and destruction will prevail. If and when a large Bolshevik force is concentrated at Kasvin and Tehran, the flanks of both India and Mesopotamia will be exposed and the Bolsheviks will be in a position to choose whether to attack in the east or in the west. If they decide to attack in the east their task would be much facilitated by the landing of further troops on the shores of the Caspian in the

vicinity of Astrabad, whence they could make a joint advance on Meshed accompanied by a simultaneous advance from the north from Askabad. Any such move on the part of the Bolsheviks towards Meshed and the Afghan frontier would probably mean an Afghan-Bolshevik alliance of a temporary kind, accompanied by war on India by Afghanistan. We know . . . that such an alliance is still in contemplation, though not yet concluded.

'In the event of the Bolsheviks deciding to advance towards the west they would probably move from Kasvin by Hamadan and Kermanshah until they reached the railhead in the vicinity of Khanikin. They would then be within about 100 or 150 miles of Baghdad and would come into direct conflict with our army of occupation. By the time they get there the whole of Persia will, for all practical purposes, have become Bolshevik, and it is difficult to foresee what the result will be except a general state of anarchy, chaos, and massacre of Christians, but in particular of British subjects, since the Bolshevik idea is to rid Persia of the British. It may possibly be considered that such developments are exaggerated and not likely to be realised, but there is absolutely no reason why it should be so and we have seen the manner in which the Bolshevik armies overcome opposition and are able to conduct operations at immense distances from their bases. The moment is particularly favourable for them since it is the beginning of the summer and most of the country in north-west Persia is mountainous and cool, with plenty of water. It would be more difficult to carry on a campaign in the summer in the direction of Meshed than towards Kermanshah, and it is consequently more likely that the Bolsheviks would, if they decide to act in Persia, undertake operations against our flank in Mesopotamia.

'I need hardly say that you know just as well as I do how disastrous the effect of our evacuation and betrayal of Persia will be on our subjects in India, both Mohommedan [*sic*] and Hindu, and the loss of prestige that we shall suffer throughout the whole of the East.

'I am still of opinion that if at the meeting of the Eastern Committee presided over by Mr. Austen Chamberlain, from which you were unfortunately absent, Mr. Winston Churchill and the C.I.G.S. had agreed, as they were pressed to do, to hold a line from Batoum to Baku, for which they estimated a force of two divisions with one in reserve would be necessary [cf. No. 373], none of these misfortunes need have happened, since the Admiralty were anxious and willing to organise the Caspian fleet so as to hold the Caspian, while, with the assistance of the Georgians, Armenians, and Azerbaijanis there is little doubt that the railway could have been held. Mr. Churchill, however, stated his definite opinion that if two divisions were available for operations in those parts they should be given to General Denikin to do as he pleased with, or to Poland.

'I have shown this to Mr. Oliphant [a member of the Central European and Persia Department] who does not wish to add anything except to remind you of General Radcliffe's attitude. [Gen. Radcliffe was Director of Military Operations, War Office.]

H.'

No. 434

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 19, 9 a.m.)

No. 289 Telegraphic [198691/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, May 18, 1920, 11.30 p.m.

Following from Norperforce Kasvin 1 a.m., May 19th.¹

Begins:—

Bolsheviks landed this morning about five miles from Enzeli and cut communication. No official details regarding situation since fourteen hours but aeroplane which arrived Kasvin 18.30 hours states that Armistice ended

¹ This date and time, which is also on the copy of the telegram in Tehran archives, appears to be incorrect. A copy in the Tehran archives of the quoted Norperforce telegram is marked 'Dated & recd. 18th May 1920'.

15 hours and General Officer Commanding compelled to agree to Bolshevik terms in view of their overwhelming strength and fact that no instructions had reached him. British evacuation Enzeli takes place to-night. Bolsheviks' coastal motor-boats entered harbour 18 hours and escorted interned steamers out. Road up to 13th verst occupied by Bolsheviks.

Thirteen ships including destroyer cover town. Nothing further known. Ends.

No. 435

Note from Earl Curzon to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs (in Paris)

[197282/150/34]*

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 19, 1920

Your Highness,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 7th instant, in which you were so good as to forward to me the draft of a communication which you are addressing to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations,¹ to the effect that the sovereignty and complete independence of Persia are not in any way affected by the Anglo-Persian Agreement of the 9th August last, and that this instrument has not placed Persia under any obligation incompatible with the pact of the League.

2. It is not of course for His Majesty's Government to say what communications the Persian Government should or should not make to the League of Nations. I may, however, be permitted to observe that there is nothing in article 20 or any other clause of the Covenant requiring any member of the League to justify itself to the League as being free from any obligations inconsistent with the Covenant. It appears to me, therefore, that the only effect of making this communication would be to afford the League a *locus standi* for examining the treaties and sitting in judgment to decide on Persia's claims to interpret the treaties in the way which she does. In fact, the procedure contemplated by your Highness would amount to an invitation from the Persian Government to the League to intervene in matters which at present are within the sovereign rights of Persia alone.

3. I should therefore be grateful if your Highness would inform me whether this is really your intention, and, if so, what the exact grounds may be for your taking so unusual a step.²

¹ Not printed.

² A note in reply (not printed) was left by Prince Firuz at the Foreign Office on May 27. In it Prince Firuz explained that his Government's objects were: '1. to formally inform the League and all foreign nations and governments that our treaties and conventions with Russia, some of which were indeed contrary to the independence of Persia, are no longer valid. . . .

2. to dispel all misunderstanding as to the nature of the Anglo-Persian agreement of the 9th. August 1919. . . .

3. to avail ourselves of the benefit of article 10 of the Covenant wherein it is laid down that the members of the League undertake to respect and preserve the *existing* political independence of all members of the League. . . .' See also No. 458, n. 2, below.

4. I beg your Highness to believe that my only reason for giving expression to these views is the fact that your Highness, by so kindly informing me of the steps which you propose to take, appears to show that you would value the friendly opinion of His Majesty's Government in this matter.

I have, &c.,

CURZON OF KEDLESTON

No. 436

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received May 21, 10 a.m.)

No. 601 (Part 1) Telegraphic [199149/150/34]

Very urgent

PARIS, May 20, 1920, 10.15 p.m.

The following is substance of two telegrams received by Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs here from Persian Prime Minister, Teheran.

1. May 17th. (Paraphrased.) 'Recent events in Caucasus have now brought about the dangerous situation which has been foreseen long since. Persia is threatened along whole of northern frontier by Bolshevik armies and propaganda, especially in Caucasus where Bolshevik Government of Baku acting in concert with Turks are beginning to execute plan to join up with Turkish forces in Anatolia after crossing northern Persia and attacking Armenia. Azerbaijan will be field of battle, this will have deplorable reaction in other parts of Persia and Kurdistan; tribes have joined Turkish forces on border of Azerbaijan. Garabagh, Baku and especially Nakhchivan are under domination of Turkish officers. Turks have combined with Tartars to annihilate Armenians and even occupy Persian Azerbaijan. Persian forces are obviously inadequate to cope with daily increasing gravity of situation. Energetic measures must be taken at once. Otherwise agitation will once more spread throughout the country, parties opposed to Anglo-Persian policy will gain strength and Government will be paralysed. Situation is aggravated and remedy made more difficult by hostility of Cossack brigade and its commander. All these circumstances combined make me think it necessary:

1) To send into Azerbaijan [*sic*], if possible under British officers, fairly large force of gendarmes and others;

11) To put sufficient funds for maintenance and recruiting of local forces at disposal of Governor of Azerbaijan;

111) That British troops now in Persian territory, whose presence gives Bolsheviks pretext for attacking Persia, should be sufficiently reinforced to allow of them being profitably utilised. Matter has been discussed by me with Sir P. Cox and he has been told that as regards new troops and those equal to already existing troops part of expense involved will be borne by Persian Government. Special account will be opened for these expenses and for sums specifically advanced by British Government for recruiting and maintenance of troops sent to Azerbaijan, method of repayment to be settled later.'

End of Part 1. Part 11 follows.¹

¹ No. 437 below.

No. 437

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received May 21, 9.4 a.m.)

No. 601 (Part 2) Telegraphic [199149/150/34]

Very urgent

PARIS, May 20, 1920, 10.10 p.m.¹

2. May 18th. 'At 8 a.m. today thirteen Bolshevik ships opened fire on Enzeli at 12,000 yards. Some shells hit customs offices. Sloops flying the white flag were sent to ask for explanations. Admiral in command replied that as he considered Denikin's ships and naval forces taking refuge at Enzeli a menace to security of Caspian, policing of which was entrusted to him by Moscow Government, he had ordered bombardment on his own initiative. He demanded surrender of Denikin's ships and temporary occupation of port pending result of negotiations between British and Sovyet [*sic*] Governments. He was told in reply (1) that Persian Government protested against bombardment of neutral port without any provocation or ag[g]ression by Persia and without any previous notice, (2) that Denikin's naval forces on taking refuge in neutral port of Enzeli had been disarmed and interned, but Persian Government were nevertheless ready to discuss matter with Bolsheviks, (3) that Persian Government could not in any way admit occupation of Enzeli.'²

Text of telegrams follows by bag.²

¹ This and the preceding telegram were despatched in reverse order.

² Under cover of Lord Derby's despatch No. 1533 of May 20, not printed.

No. 438

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon

(Received May 20, 1920, 9.30 p.m.)

No. 602 Telegraphic [199077/150/34]

Very urgent

PARIS, May 20, 1920¹

Persian (? Minister of Foreign Affairs) has been to see me. He is very much perturbed at news he has received from Persia in two telegrams, substance of which is given in my immediately preceding telegram.² He has also received a third telegram not yet translated in which it is stated that British force at Enzeli keep asking for instructions as to what they are to do. He believes however that they have retired.

He does not think Bolshevik force is very large but British force not sufficient to resist them.

He asks following questions:

1. Can British Government send him reinforcements? failing that can they—

2. Send him British officers to recruit gendarmerie, and at the same time supply them with arms, ammunition and money? Failing that—

¹ The hour of despatch is not recorded.

² Nos. 436 and 437.

3. What advice does British Government give as to their proper conduct? Shall they enter into negotiations with Soviet Government?

The Persian Cossack force is not dissolved and frankly hostile.

French Minister also hostile and evidently pleased at Persia's present difficulties.

Meanwhile Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs has sent letter to the Secretary of the League of Nations protesting against bombardment of Enzeli a neutral town without any previous warning.³

Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs is not well enough at present moment to travel to England: he hopes to do so next Monday May 24th and meanwhile urgently requests your help and advice.

³ A copy of this letter, dated May 19, is printed in *L/N. O.J.*, No. 5, July-Aug. 1920, pp. 215-16.

No. 439

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 277 Telegraphic [199314/150/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 21, 1920, 8 p.m.*

Cabinet discussed this afternoon recent events at Enzeli.

It appeared to be doubtful from military telegrams how far Soviet landing indicated a serious desire either to invade Persia or to pick a quarrel with ourselves, or whether it would be prelude to sustained invasion.

Till further information is received on these points it is difficult to estimate nature or extent of danger. Decision was arrived at to withdraw Enzeli force upon Kasvin, to concentrate there, with reinforcements sent up from Hamadan side, and to stand firm at Kasvin pending further movements either by Russian or by Persian Cossack forces. I propose to discuss situation with Persian Foreign Minister when he returns here next week, by which time we should have fuller information.

In the meantime you should dissuade Persian Government from pessimistic views which do not seem to be justified by situation so far as it has yet developed.

Repeated to India; to Paris No. 595.

No. 440

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 23, 7 p.m.)

No. 296 Telegraphic [199404/150/34]

TEHRAN, *May 22, 1920, 12.55 p.m.*

Situation report.

All was quiet at Resht and Enzeli on May 20th and on May 21st evening General Champain telegraphed that so far there was no sign whatever of Bolshevik movement from Enzeli inland. On the contrary he had reliable

information to the effect that only a few Bolshevik ships remained and that force landed had already been considerably reduced. He was to interview Bolshevik commander on evening of May 21st or morning of May 22nd and would report result. Two thousand Bolsheviks are reported to have landed at (? Ast)ara, of which 200 have left in a southerly direction. They may merely be an outpost, but this flank needs to be watched.

Situation in town is not bad, all considered, but public are of course in a high-strung state. There is a (? slight) run on bank, and to-day a well known Extremist issued a manifesto under his own name demanding formation of a Democratic Government on principles which are practically Bolshevik. On the other hand imminent Bolshevik menace is having a salutary effect on party politicians and there is some reaction in favour of Prime Minister.

At pressing demand of French Minister who with his Military Attaché are at pains to believe any alarmist report which may get abroad, United States Minister called a meeting of his colleagues on May 21st at which I was asked for latest military information; what chances there were of North Persian force being unfavourable (? to making hostile) advance¹ and to what extent Bagdad would be able to provide transport in the event of evacuation of Teheran. I suggested that news did not at present justify discussion of evacuation as a lively problem and that we should await expected appreciation of the position by General Champain after interview with Bolshevik Commander, and that meanwhile it was incumbent on us to do nothing to start a panic.

Russian Chargé d'Affaires and three of his staff have (? decided to) leave.

They have come to the end of their money and are (? convinced) that a demand for their surrender is to be expected so they think it better to clear before they become a difficult problem for Persian Government and this Legation.

Present Consul Hildebrand has volunteered to remain in charge of Legation.

(Repeated to India 296, Bagdad.)

¹ The text as sent here read: 'being able to repel bolshevic advance'.

No. 441

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 23, 2 p.m.)

No. 297 Telegraphic [199405/150/34]

TEHRAN, May 22, 1920, 12.55 p.m.

Prime Minister and [Acting] Minister for Foreign Affairs called on me morning of May 21st to discuss situation. Former stated that although General Champain's reports were somewhat reassuring, general outlook was very disquieting. Reports from Tabriz indicated a dangerous situation, also those from Ardebil and Astara while on Mazanderan side Bolsheviks at Karasu had sent an ultimatum to Governor of Asterabad demanding surrender of

archives of Russian Consulate within forty-eight hours. Russian Consul there is believed to be in collusion with Bolsheviks.

Referring to manifesto mentioned in my immediately preceding telegram¹ Prime Minister remarked that it would obviously not be possible for him and his Cabinet, with their record, to compromise with a Soviet movement, and they would do their utmost to counter such a tendency.

He continued that they had thought it necessary to consider in advance (? what they) would do in the event of a Bolshevik advance in force on Kasvin either from Enzeli or Tabriz, and they had decided that seat of Government would be moved to Hamadan, and that if situation became dangerous within next few days they would stop the Shah there. I of course expressed hope that atmosphere would clear and that this would not become necessary.

Finally he emphasised that unless Persia had the effective moral and material support of the Allies in general and Great Britain in particular in coping with Bolshevism, outlook was indeed a gloomy one. In this connection he enquired whether I did not think that it might strengthen the hands of His Majesty's Government, before Parliament and public, if Persia were to address an identical appeal to each of the Allied Powers asking for help at this juncture. I replied that I did not favour such a course: that the other Allies were not in a position to render any prompt assistance even if they wanted to, and that the only result of appeal would be that Great Britain would still bear the burden but others would use the appeal as a pretext for meddling in Persian affairs. As they however seemed bent on taking some immediate action of this sort I (? proposed)² a protest through Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to Council of League of Nations against flagrant violation of all international principles by gratuitous bombardment of Enzeli without the slightest warning.³

They also reverted to their former proposal to get in direct touch with Moscow Government by despatch of a Mission.⁴ I advised them to await further report from General Champain of his interview with Bolshevik commander.

It is more than a month ago since your Lordship advised them to await result of Allied *pourparler* with Soviet then going on,⁵ and I should be glad to know what present position is. It is of little use their discussing business with these semi-detached Bolshevik commanders who admittedly act on their own initiative and are a law unto themselves, and I think stage has been reached when interests of Persia will be prejudiced if she cannot discuss situation with Moscow Government or if we cannot do it on her behalf.

Sent to India 297 and Bagdad.

¹ No. 440.

² The text as sent read: 'recommended'.

³ For the Persian note of protest of May 19 see No. 438, n. 3. Later Persian communications of May 29 and 31 are printed in *L/N. O.J.*, No. 5, pp. 216-17.

⁴ See No. 401.

⁵ See No. 407.

No. 442

The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received May 22, 10 p.m.)

No. 615 Telegraphic [199344/150/34]

Urgent

PARIS, May 22, 1920, 6.20 p.m.

Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs is very anxious to know your views on Bolshevik attack.

Please refer to my telegram 602.¹ He is much pressed from Teheran for information on point there mentioned and which your telegram No. 277 to Teheran² does not completely cover.

Moreover my telegram 614³ will have reached you by now: it puts a different complexion on affairs at Enzeli, etc. and would hardly justify the concluding paragraph of your telegram 277 to Teheran.

¹ No. 438.

² No. 439.

³ Of May 21, not printed. This had reported that, according to a telegram received by Prince Firuz from the Persian Prime Minister, British troops had had to withdraw to Resht 'as they were surrounded' and the Bolsheviks were 'undoubtedly preparing for immediate advance'.

No. 443

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 23, 10 p.m.)

No. 301 Telegraphic [199408/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, May 23, 1920, 3.10 p.m.

Please see Foreign Department telegram No. 622 S May 18th to Secretary of State for India.¹ Withdrawal from Eastern Persia.

Persian Government would not have opposed it but for Enzeli incident. They urge now and I think with reason that withdrawal from Khorassan at this moment will naturally (? be) connected in the public mind with enforced withdrawal from Enzeli and will greatly stimulate Bolshevik enterprise and propaganda on Khorassan front. Moreover (? rational)² suggestion that our action is prompted by our sincere wish to strengthen Persia and enable her to stand alone will not go far in face of simultaneous despatch of reinforcements from Bagdad to Kasvin. On these grounds Persian Government ask that movements be delayed till British or Persian Government have been able to get in touch with (? Bolshevik) authorities and ascertain their real intentions in regard to Persia.

Request has my entire support.

Sent to India No. 301 and Meshed No. 73.

¹ Not printed.

² The text as sent read: 'pious'.

*The Earl of Derby (Paris) to Earl Curzon (Received May 28)**No. 1593 [200341/150/34]*

PARIS, May 25, 1920

My Lord,

With reference to my despatch No. 1573 of May 22nd,¹ I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that the French Press continues to point out what it considers to have been the errors of the Persian policy of Great Britain, and scarcely troubles to hide its satisfaction at the difficulties in North Persia which, so it is declared, have been brought about chiefly through the fault of Great Britain.

The 'Temps' in its issue of yesterday evening, after attacking British policy in Turkey and in particular the policy, which it ascribes to General Milne,² 'of constituting the Turkish Government sufficiently strong to crush the Nationalists and at the same time sufficiently subservient to sign the Treaty which has been prepared at London and San Remo',³ adds that 'the truth is that none of the Allies will gain anything by desiring to supplant the others. In the East, as elsewhere, no lasting policy can be based except on justice, and success is finally achieved only by loyalty. In the East, as elsewhere, patriotism is the best rampart against bolshevism. But if we wish that the national sentiment of the Turks and the Persians should bar the way to the Bolshevists, we must first of all know how to act ourselves.'

The 'Temps' concludes by commenting on the explanation often made that the Anglo-Persian Treaty of the 3rd [9th] August 1919 does not attack the independence of Persia nor the Covenant of the League of Nations. Its comments consist in the following quotation from a leading article in the 'Washington Post' of October 5th last: 'none of those who have paid attention even superficially to the Treaty signed on the 3rd [sic] August between Great Britain and Persia can fail to see that Great Britain has struck a blow, voluntarily or involuntarily, at the League of Nations whose creation is now proposed. Before the ink was dry on Great Britain's ratification of the Treaty of Peace, even while the British Parliament was discussing the Covenant of the League of Nations, negotiations at Teheran had reached a point where the independence of Persia was surrendered and where the control of the Persian nation was transferred to British hands.'⁴

¹ Not printed.

² General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Army of the Black Sea.

³ See Chap. I, especially Nos. 61 and 64.

⁴ In his telegram No. 327 of June 2 (not printed) Sir P. Cox reported the Persian Government's irritation at the hostile tone of this article. 'They propose', he said, 'to telegraph to Firouz or Persian Minister complaining . . . but [Acting] Minister for Foreign Affairs begged me to ask Your Lordship whether His Majesty's Government could not make tone of article in question (which they assume to have been inspired, or issued with cognisance of French Government) a ground for some remonstrance on the part of His Majesty's Government.' Lord Curzon noted on the file on May 31: 'I spoke very strongly to M. Cambon this afternoon.' Cf. No. 448 below.

The 'Temps' is not the only newspaper to write in this strain. The 'Gaulois' of this morning, in an article headed 'Persia threatened', says that, as England appears to be incapable for the present of protecting Persia against the Russian invasion, supported by the Turks, 'it is quite intelligible that the Persians should turn against the authors of a policy the errors of which they are now beginning to expiate'. The Shah, this newspaper says, is not responsible: he has been constantly hostile to the conclusion of the Anglo-Persian agreement, and must be considered as a victim of the intrigues of his Government. The paper admits that it is doubtless difficult for France, as the Ally of Great Britain, to support those who attack British influence. France cannot, however, forget that she lately enjoyed considerable credit in Persia, thanks to the exercise of her intellectual and scientific resources. France has faithful friends and numerous admirers in Persia, and it would be regrettable if she were to disinterest herself in Persia's fate and the future of the work which she has already undertaken there.

Pertinax in the 'Écho de Paris' of this morning, paints in black colours the position in the near East, and the Turco-Bolshevik threat to British interests everywhere. He speaks of the Persian Nationalists 'irritated by the recent military agreement concluded with London in execution of the "quasi protectorate" Treaty of last summer, participating in the movement which the Emir of Kabul and his war-like tribes are only too disposed to extend towards the East'. The article continues, 'British Ministers can estimate to-day the fault which they have committed in abandoning Russia to her lot and in allowing her to retreat towards all that is Asiatic in her history and mentality. They thought that they could escape at the least expense to themselves by purchasing peace through weakness, in pushing the small border States into the arms of Moscow, and in raising in the Caucasus a fragile barricade of half-formed republics. May the mistake of the Turkish Treaty not add to the offensive against Europe? Whatever the future may bring forth, the precipitate evacuation of Enzeli by the English coming after our bitter defeats in Cilicia teaches us a lesson; no more scattering of military forces, no more despatching of troops in small bodies, no more isolated garrisons. While waiting for effective re-establishment of our policies, let us rest content to hold solidly to the essential points.'

The 'Journal des Débats', in an article in its issue of yesterday evening by Monsieur Auguste Gauvain on Bolshevism in Asia, says that the Western Powers can only triumph over a return to barbarity on the condition that they are closely united—which so far, has not been the case. Two dangers are particularly apparent: the possibility of a fresh massacre in Armenia, and the 'contamination' of Persia. The Anglo-Persian Agreement of August 3rd 1919 has not in any way succeeded in protecting Persia against Bolshevik invasion.

An article in the 'Action française' of this morning, in defence of Poland and against the policy of abandoning her to her fate, concludes by asking whether the English believe that in sacrificing Poland they would win the favour of the Bolsheviks and check the invasion of Persia.

I would add that the general tenour of the article above-quoted is perhaps rendered more significant by the apparent omission on the part of the bulk of the French press to publish a communiqué favourable to the Anglo-Persian agreement, which was issued the day before yesterday by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs (Please see my despatch No. 1592 of May 24th).⁵

I have, &c.,
DERBY

⁵ Not printed.

No. 445

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 283 Telegraphic [200676/150/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May 27, 1920, 3 p.m.*

I saw Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon and told him that optimistic opinions which I had ventured to express both to you and to Cabinet had not so far been falsified by events. I did not myself believe that Bolsheviks contemplated serious invasion of Persia, and should not be surprised if their forces were presently withdrawn. I explained clearly to him solicitude of War Office as to security or usefulness of small, outlying military detachments at end of long-drawn line, whether at Tabreez, Enzeli or Meshed; and acquainted him with annual cost of these several detachments, the figures of which caused him the liveliest surprise. I said that there was no abatement in our desire and intention to do our best for Persia, and that my assurances to that effect remained unmodified. Proposed military concentration at Kazvin, to which two battalions were being moved up in reinforcement, was an earnest of our intentions in this respect, and should be adequate to deal with any situation likely to arise. I told him further that, upon expected arrival of Krassin in this country, I proposed to point out to him inconsistency of requests to assist economic recovery of Russia with active hostility of Soviet forces in so many parts of the world, and to say that, if favours were expected, hostilities should cease.¹

I willingly authorised despatch to Moscow of protest against Soviet proceedings at Enzeli, drawn up by Vossugh-ud-Dowleh,² and enquired about statement of Chicherin reported by wireless in 'Times' that Persian deputation is on its way to Moscow.³ Firuz did not believe this, but undertook to enquire.

Upon his asking if he should see Krassin while in this country, I replied that I saw no objection, but that he had better wait until I had opened with latter and until Moscow's reply to Persian protest had been received.

¹ M. Leonid Krassin, leader of the Soviet Russian Trade Delegation to England, arrived in London on May 27; cf. Vol. VIII, Chap. III, e.g. pp. 301-3, and Vol. XII, No. 708.

² According to a Foreign Office memorandum of June 7 (not printed) Prince Firuz had despatched this protest by wireless telegram on the evening of May 26.

³ See *The Times*, May 24, p. 7. M. Chicherin was Soviet Russian People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

Upon his asking what line Persian Government should adopt in present situation, I suggested that they should not be overmuch disturbed by local or partisan intrigues, should deal firmly but quietly with Starasselski [*sic*], and should fight the battle of Anglo-Persian Agreement with renewed vigour. Indeed I said I could not understand why they had not already convened the Mejilis [*sic*], placed the agreement before it and openly challenged a verdict. I could not myself conceive that any Persian Assembly would prefer to exchange the enhanced stability and security which Persia had already begun to enjoy for the chaos which would follow the abandonment of this policy; and if I were in the position of the Persian Government I would feel tempted to adopt a bolder line.

Firuz Mirza was concerned at prospect of reunion of old Russian Imperialist Party with Bolshevik forces, and the revival of former Russian pretensions to a virtual protectorate over Northern Persia.

I pointed out that this was entirely inconsistent with Chicherin's published messages,⁴ nor was it supported by retirement from Teheran of members of former Russian Legation, as reported by you.⁵

The Minister left me in a mood which was far from being despondent. Repeated to India.

⁴ For M. Chicherin's note of June 26, 1919, see No. 446 below, n. 3, and for his 'appeal to the workers and peasants of Persia' of Aug. 30, 1919, see Degras, vol. i, pp. 161-4.

⁵ See No. 440.

No. 446

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 28, 6.45 p.m.)

No. 320 Telegraphic [200561/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, May 28, 1920, 9.6 a.m.

Reply from Tchitcherin was received yesterday by Persian Government to Nusret-ed-Dowleh (? that he is)¹ protesting against the bombardment of Enzeli.

Presumably text will reach His Majesty's Government by wireless² so I do not repeat it. Suffice it to say that it is friendly in tone and seems to dispel all probability of Bolshevik advance into (? Persia) at present and to suggest that landing party will leave Enzeli after some further negotiations.

Reference is made to Bolshevik Note to Persia of June (*sic*) 26th.³ I will repeat summary of this if reference to records indicates that His Majesty's Government had not received it.

Repeated to India and Bagdad, No. (? 1)64.

¹ The text as sent read: 'Nusret ed Dowlah's telegram'. See No. 445, n. 2.

² No wireless telegram transmitting the text has been traced in Foreign Office archives. The text was, however, summarized in *The Times* of June 3, 1920, p. 15.

³ The note referred to is that of June 26, 1919, of which the Russian text is printed as No. 129 in *D.V.P.S.S.S.R.*, vol. ii (Moscow, 1958). An English version is printed as Annex II in N. F. Fatemi's *Diplomatic History of Persia*, vol. i, pp. 326-9. In this note the Soviet Government set out, in sixteen Articles, its good intentions towards the Persian Government.

No. 447

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received May 30, 10.6 a.m.)

No. 318 Telegraphic [200664/165162/34]

TEHRAN, May 28, 1920, 9.35 a.m.

Persian Government have sent to me for confidential perusal letter dated November, 1919, from Amir to Shah which Afghan envoy delivered on arrival last month.

Amir remarks that intimate relations between two Islamic countries have not been possible hitherto owing to attitude of the despotic and avaricious world conquering powers who have always regarded Pan-Islamism with suspicious disfavour. Now however thanks to world war Afghanistan has achieved her independence and accordingly seeks closer relations with her Islamic neighbour. Sudar¹ Abdul Aziz is being sent as temporary, and if acceptable, as permanent, envoy and it is hoped that Persia will reciprocate by sending a high dignitary as their² representative to Kabul. Letter concludes with prayer for solidarity between Islamic states and makes no allusion to any questions of Treaty.

As envoy has not been announced to foreign Legations and did not call on them on arrival neither British nor Allied Legations have made his acquaintance. He was present at Prime Minister's banquet on Shah's coronation Day on May 16th, which I did not attend on account of Court mourning.³

Sent to India.

¹ In the Foreign Office this was amended to 'Sardar', as in the text sent from Tehran.

² Amended in the Foreign Office to 'her': 'their' in the text as sent.

³ The Court was in mourning for H.R.H. the Crown Princess of Sweden, cousin of H.M. King George V.

No. 448

Earl Curzon to Sir G. Grahame¹ (Paris)

*No. 1799 [201225/192904/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, May 31, 1920

Sir,

The French Ambassador called upon me this afternoon. . . .²

There remained two other subjects to which it was my duty to call the attention of his Excellency.

The first was the continued unfriendly attitude of M. Bonin, the French Minister in Tehran. I reminded M. Cambon that, when the Anglo-Persian Agreement was announced in the course of last year, M. Bonin had distinguished himself by an attitude of marked hostility in Tehran. I had complained about the matter to his Excellency, who had made representations

¹ Minister in H.M. Embassy, Paris.

² The omitted five paragraphs referred to the negotiations with the Soviet Trade Delegation (see Vol. XII, No. 709, n. 5) and to Syrian affairs.

to his Government, and had assured me that formal instructions had been sent to M. Bonin to desist from his attitude and to conduct himself in a more reasonable way.³ In spite of this, M. Bonin had not modified his antagonism, and, in the course of the present year, Lord Hardinge had been obliged to renew our complaints to M. Cambon. On this occasion we had been told that M. Bonin had been recalled from Tehran; but, greatly to our surprise, just as he was leaving, he had been ordered by the French Government to remain, and, taking advantage of this respite, had resumed his former unfriendly activities.⁴

I was not the sole witness to this attitude myself, as informed by our representative in Tehran, for the Persian Foreign Minister, who was now in this country and had recently called upon me,⁵ had complained bitterly of the implacable hostility of M. Bonin, as also of the conduct of the French Government in Paris with regard to the recent change of Persian Minister there.⁶

I was at a loss to understand how the French Minister in Tehran could persevere in this attitude unless he had, or thought he had, instructions to that effect from his Government at home. The French Ambassador himself constantly protested to me against acts of alleged unfriendliness to French interests of which British captains and colonels were supposed to have been guilty in Syria and the neighbouring parts. But here, I said, was a direct representative following this unfriendly line of conduct in a foreign capital. I felt entitled to point out to his Excellency the very opposite nature of the policy which I had endeavoured to pursue, in hearty co-operation with the French Government, in regard to the Emir Feisal, with whom it would have been quite easy at any time, by independent or uncandid action, to make their relations even more difficult than they now were;⁷ and I felt sure that the Ambassador would represent to his Government the desirability of putting an end to a state of affairs in Tehran which it seemed to me almost impossible to defend.

M. Cambon listened to these representations with close interest, endeavoured to suggest an element of exaggeration in the reports that had reached me from the Persian Foreign Minister, explained that diplomatic representatives at a distance from home did not always conduct themselves with perfect restraint, and promised to bring my representations to the immediate notice of M. Millerand.⁸ . . .⁹

³ See Vol. IV, No. 728.

⁴ See No. 316, n. 4.

⁵ See No. 445.

⁶ A memorandum (not printed) on these subjects had been handed in to the Foreign Office by the Persian Minister of Foreign Affairs on May 27.

⁷ On March 8 the Emir Feisal had been proclaimed King of an independent Syria; see Nos. 219 ff.

⁸ French President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁹ The remainder of the despatch related to Egypt, Morocco, and Tangier and is here omitted.

No. 449

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 4, 11 a.m.)

No. 332 Telegraphic [201783/150/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, *June 3, 1920, 5.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 330.¹

After reception at Bagh-i-Shah on arrival, Shah and Vossuk-ed-Dowleh drove in state slowly through town. They had extraordinarily good reception throughout except at one spot where a handful of students after shouting 'Long life to Shah' shouted (? 'Death) to English and Agreement'. Students . . .² reports received were from 'French alliance' school, and effort is supposed to have been engendered³ by French Legation. In this belief Persian Government take for granted that (? French Minister) will telegraph item home and have telegraphed to Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to . . .⁴ for a *démenti*.

Repeated to Baghdad 172, for information.

¹ The reference is probably to Sir P. Cox's telegram No. 333 (not printed), despatched from Tehran at 9 a.m. on June 3 and received in the Foreign Office at 9.5 a.m. on June 4. This telegram which reported the arrival and official reception of the Shah on June 2 was sent to India as No. 330.

² The text received was here uncertain. The Foreign Office suggested: 'according to': these words were in the text as sent from Tehran.

³ The text as sent read: 'engineered'.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'have telegraphed to Nosret-ed-Dowleh material'.

No. 450

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [203083/150/34]

Personal

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 3, 1920, 9 p.m.*

We propose to authorise Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia to announce your intended appointment as High Commissioner of that country, under the Mandate, text of which is now being prepared for submission to the League of Nations.

Announcement will have, we are convinced, a very reassuring effect upon the inhabitants, with whom your prestige stands so deservedly high.

As soon as you return home, which we hope will be by quickest available route, we desire to consult you about provisional administration of Mesopotamia, pending final constitution to be drawn up under the Mandate, and we hope that you may then be able to take up your task in the Autumn.

In the meantime I cannot allow you to leave Persia without a word of sincere congratulation upon the splendid work which you have accomplished, and of regret that an even superior public call compels you to leave before carrying it to a final issue.

No. 451

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 307 Telegraphic [201215/150/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 5, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 311 (of May 25th).¹

War Office have no fresh news of movements of troops against Tabriz, but Military position in North West Persia renders it impossible to maintain British detachment at Tabriz any longer and they insist that orders already issued for its withdrawal must hold good.

¹ Not printed.

No. 452

Note from Mr. Balfour¹ to Lord Hardinge

[203882/150/34]

LONDON, June 5, 1920

The difficulty which I hope you will discuss with M. Cambon in connection with Persia and the League of Nations arises in the following way.

All French opinion firmly believes that Firouz's action² is due to British inspiration. Their reasons for this conviction are that:—

(1) they think it a subtle method of securing international recognition of the Anglo-Persian Agreement. (Surely a very foolish view, seeing that international recognition is not required under the Pact, although we have promised, in accordance with our general views, to communicate the Treaty to the League.)

(2) Their second reason is more plausible. They regard all these negotiations with Krassin as a preliminary to opening formal relations with the Soviet authorities, leading up to ultimate recognition. They think that if the Council is forced to apply Article 17 (which allows them to invite the Soviet Government, *under conditions*, to take part in their deliberations) this would be a long step towards such a consummation. I am by no means sure that they are wrong. It is quite likely to be advocated by the British representative, unless the Cabinet take a different view.

(3) In the third place, they believe that Persia is little better than a protected State, and hardly deserves to be counted as a member of the League of Nations. They regard it as a mere puppet in the hands of the British Foreign Office.

All these jealousies and suspicions are doubly envenomed by our difficulties with the French over other matters. If by talking to M. Cambon, you could explain how matters really stand, you would greatly facilitate the work of the

¹ Lord President of the Council and British Empire representative at the fifth session of the Council of the League of Nations.

² For the Persian appeal of May 19 to the League of Nations see No. 438, n. 3.

British representatives at their next meeting of the League;—which, I now hear, is likely to take place in London on Monday the 14th, for the express purpose of dealing with the Persian question.³

A. J. B.

³ Lord Hardinge, in a minute dated June 9, recorded as follows: 'I asked Monsieur Cambon to call and see me to-day on his return from Paris, and I spoke to him in the sense of Mr. Balfour's note in connection with the approaching meeting of the League of Nations due to the action of Prince Firouz. In reply he told me that we were wrong in imagining that French opinion believes that Firouz's action was due to British inspiration: on the contrary, the opinion of the Quai d'Orsay is that it must be very embarrassing for us, especially in view of the fact that Prince Firouz has had the indiscretion to proclaim everywhere that his action is due to the fact that England has been unable to protect Persia against a Bolshevik invasion, and that the only other course open to Persia in self-defence was to have recourse to the intervention of the League of Nations.

'Monsieur Cambon told me that when Monsieur Bourgeois [French representative at the fifth session of the Council of the League of Nations] first heard of Prince Firouz's action he went straight to Monsieur Millerand and told him that he thought it very embarrassing and that he did not see what action could be taken by the Council of the League, nor what his own attitude as the French representative should be. Monsieur Millerand replied that the matter did not concern France in any way and that he left it to Monsieur Bourgeois to decide what course he should take.

'Monsieur Cambon observed that he did not see how reference of this question to the League of Nations could be productive of any result whatever, nor could he see that there was any action which the League of Nations could take by which the Soviet Government might in any way be influenced: he thought the whole action of Prince Firouz a big mistake, but that it was only what he would have expected of him.

'I am sending a copy of this minute to Mr. Balfour.

H.'

Lord Curzon minuted: 'I entirely agree. C.'

No. 453

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 7, 9.30 a.m.)

No. 348 Telegraphic [202002/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 6, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 297.¹

I beg respectfully to refer Your Lordship to my telegrams Nos. 271 May 14th,² 303 May 24th³ and 331 June 3rd.³

Three valuable weeks have since elapsed and in absence of any solid assurances from His Majesty's Government in matter of provision of funds for financing proposed precautionary measures no forward action has been taken or been possible.

Prime Minister[']s⁴ views are as stated in telegrams above cited. Simultaneous withdrawal of our detachments from (? Resht) Tabriz and Meshed coupled with delay in reply of His Majesty's Government is making Prime

¹ Of June 3, not printed.

² No. 425.

³ Not printed.

⁴ Wording in text as sent from Tehran.

Minister's position so impossible that it is only with great difficulty that I can present [prevent]⁴ him from resigning.

I beg for favourable and definite reply by clear the line.⁵

⁵ In his first telegram (Tehran No. 362) after presenting his credentials to the Shah on June 10 Mr. Norman earnestly begged 'for an early and favourable answer to Sir P. Cox's telegram No. 348'.

No. 454

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

No. 309 Telegraphic [201333/150/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 7, 1920, 8 p.m.

Value of arms and munition ordered for Persian Government amounts to some £500,000.

Treasury consider no further consignments should be despatched than such as have already been sent until Financial Adviser's opinion has been received and considered in relation to probable requirements of other services likewise to be financed from the loan.

Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs is pressing for delivery of arms and Director of Military Operations shares view that any delay may prove disastrous.

I am so informing Treasury on whom responsibility would in that eventuality lie.

You should however obtain from Financial Adviser his views on matter at earliest possible moment.

No. 455

Earl Curzon to Sir P. Cox (Tehran)

*No. 311 Telegraphic [201530/150/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 7, 1920, 8 p.m.

The Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks that the Shah should be urged to take energetic action, without delay, to prove publicly that he supports Prime Minister, that for this purpose he should issue a proclamation urging that order and security be maintained and warning the people against dangerous propaganda. His Majesty should make it clear that he approves the policy pursued by the Government, and make an appeal for union among all classes to save the country from danger. Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks that the Shah should furthermore summon the notables and speak to them similarly. He adds that for the full effect of these measures to be felt they should be taken at once.

He proposes to telegraph himself direct to the Shah, and suggests that you should confer with Prime Minister on the subject.

The plan is worth trying, and you should act accordingly.¹

As to Starosselsky, the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks that the Shah should now be pressed to dismiss him, and I agree that no time should be lost.

What are your views on this point?

¹ In his telegram No. 653 of June 7 (not printed) Lord Curzon asked Lord Derby to inform Prince Firuz of the instructions being sent to Sir P. Cox and to say that 'it would be well if he telegraphed to His Majesty as he proposed'.

No. 456

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 10, 2 p.m.)

No. 356 Telegraphic [202912/150/34]

TEHRAN, June 8, 1920, 10.55 a.m.

Prime Minister has had two long interviews with Shah and I have had one.

To me he expressed complete readiness to support Vossuk-ed-Dowleh's and our policy while as regards Cossack Division he said that although it was against his personal inclinations, owing to devotion of Starosselski and Division to himself, yet he had every intention of demonstrating his loyalty to agreement by acquiescing in its adoption.¹ He continued, that question as to how problem could be most effectively and yet pacifically solved was a difficult one, but matter would be carefully deliberated between Prime Minister, Legation and himself.

He reiterated that he found on his return that Vossuk-ed-Dowleh had many enemies and was very unpopular but that he would support him as long as we wanted, and agreed that he would be very difficult to replace.

Vossuk-ed-Dowleh was a good deal disappointed with his own interviews with His Majesty. He said that he was full of expressions of approval and verbal assurances of support but when any particular business in which . . .² needed was indicated to him he burked the question by saying that he would consider it at leisure. Conversation always gravitated back to question of His Majesty's finances. He upbraided Prime Minister for not complying with his demands for funds when in Europe: said he knew no reason why he should spend his private means on his European tour and as an earnest of Prime Minister's friendly intentions he demanded immediate refund of (firstly) one million francs expended from his private purse, (secondly) £8,000 borrowed from Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs before leaving, (thirdly) 50,000 tomans which he had left with Tomaniantz³ but which latter is unable to pay.

Vossuk-ed-Dowleh said he had to promise to do his best to find the funds but that he knew nowhere to turn for them, and Shah's attitude in this regard seemed to show that His Majesty had not changed his spots.

¹ In the text as sent from Tehran this word read: 'transformation'.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'any particular direction in which it would be'.

³ See No. 593 below.

We now await Mr. Norman's assumption of post⁴ and hope that friendly influence he has probably acquired over the Shah during journey may avert a split between these two antipathetic characters.

⁴ See No. 453, n. 5.

No. 457

Sir P. Cox (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 11, 10.45 a.m.)

No. 361 Telegraphic [203108/150/34]

TEHRAN, June 10, 1920, 10 a.m.

Three telegrams, of which summary is given below reached Teheran this morning from Resht but Persian Government have for the present forbidden their delivery and when they become known they propose to point out their absurdity.

Firstly. Begins:

Proclamation to all the people. Begins:

The Red Revolutionary Committee of Persia after formation of Soviet Republican Government and official announcement of same to public, has nominated following persons as Commissaries for conduct of administration. They are notified in order that affairs of (? party) (? local)¹ departments may be referred to them. Any person seeing anything wrong in any department of administration is at liberty to draw their attention to it. Ends.

Then follow names of ten local inhabitants of Gilan as Commissaries of State.

Kuchik-Khan Jangali leader figures as Premier and Minister of War. Dated 8th June signed (? Red) Revolutionary Committee of Persia.

Secondly. From same Committee: Begins: Addressed to American and French Legations and other foreign representatives at Teheran.

The English after outbreak of world-consuming war in order to achieve their unlawful ends, violated neutrality of Persia and sent their armed (? forces) into country and brought about (? ruin of) country and people. In reply to repeated protests of Nationalists, they gave categorical promise that on conclusion of world war, they would release and relieve Persia and Persians from burden of their troops.

War ended and Peace was officially declared. Pressure exercised by English, in absence of a National Parliament, towards country and people, increased so that by force of assistance British power and covetousness . . .² military Government was instituted at Capital and in Provinces and an ill-omened and (? independence) breaking agreement was brought about which is incompatible with (? dignity) and aspiration of the people. It reached such an extent, even appeals of oppressed and their full (*sic*) powers³ were prevented from reaching assemblies of partizans of humanity.

¹ The text as sent read: 'affairs concerning their departments'.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'by the force of the assistance of British power and bayonets a military Government'.

³ The text as sent read: 'and their protests'.

Now Council of Republic of Persia which before extending to capital has been formed in Gilan decrees, in name of Persian nation pending establishment of Republican Parliament in Capital all kinds of agreements which British Government may give or have made with Persian Government are (? illegal) and annulled.

Dated 9th June.

Thirdly. Begins: Through Legation of American Republic and honoured French Minister and Representatives of all Powers in Teheran.

The Red Revolutionary Committee of Persia on June 6th, in name of people of Persia, upon our . . .⁴ existence and monarchy (? was) abolished and Provisional Government of Republican Council was established and proclaimed. By medium of said Legations may it be known that affectionate foreign relations . . .⁵ was sent . . .⁵ it be known to all Legations of Foreign Powers residing in Teheran. We hope and request that they will communicate same to their Governments. Signed Red Revolutionary Committee Yan.⁶ Ends.

Sent to India No. 361 Bagdad 183 for General.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'of Persia came into existence'.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. In the text as sent this sentence read: 'By the medium of the said Legations, may it be known to all the Legations of the foreign powers residing in Tehran.'

⁶ The text as sent read: 'of Iran'.

No. 458

Record by Mr. Oliphant of a conversation with the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs

[203724/150/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 10, 1920

In accordance with Lord Curzon's instructions, I requested the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs to call this morning. My nominal reason was in order to tell him Lord Curzon's view regarding his desire to see M. Krassin¹ and His Lordship's decision that Prince Firouz could send in to the League of Nations his note about the Russian treaties² 'on his own responsibility'. This latter phrase perplexed him somewhat and he said that he hoped that the British Representative would not go against him, but would support him, should the matter be raised in the Council. I explained that Lord Curzon had throughout held the view that it would be better for him not to address such a note to the League: if, however, His Highness desired to send in the note, while I did not think that any British Representative would ever positively side against him, it was, in my opinion, impossible to expect British

¹ Cf. No. 445. In a minute of June 4 Lord Curzon agreed that there was now no objection to Prince Firuz meeting M. Krassin. The meeting took place on June 17.

² i.e. the communication sent in draft to Lord Curzon on May 7, see No. 435. This note had included a list of Persian treaties and conventions with Russia which the Persian Government had denounced on Jan. 27, 1918, and regarded as no longer valid.

support in view of Lord Curzon's decision; and presumably therefore the British Representative would remain mute. His Highness said, in view of my remarks, that he would reflect upon the whole subject before deciding to send in the note.

I then enquired what the atmosphere had been in Paris;³ he said that it had been extremely bad. The Press had been absolutely unanimous in its abuse of Persia and in great measure of our attitude there,⁴ so much so that he was convinced that it was on a *mot d'ordre*. He had therefore asked to see M. Millerand, to whom he had expressed himself extremely frankly regarding France's attitude towards Persia and of whom he enquired what the attitude of the French Representative would be at the forthcoming meeting of the League of Nations. His Excellency replied that the French Government would hold aloof in the matter and not exercise any pressure whatever on the French Representative on the Council, which was in a measure separate from and above all national Governments; but he gave H.H. to understand clearly that he could not count on any support from France.⁵ This gave me an opportunity to remark that I had been thinking of the possible procedures to be followed by the League on this subject. I saw no benefit that could be derived from the meeting. His Highness was in no way abashed. He said that he realised that the Italians had been flirting with the Bolsheviki and might therefore be difficult as regards according their support to the Persian cause. This would probably be the same, though for other reasons, in the case of the French. Should the League come to a decision, presumably their action would be either:—

(a) to request H.M.G. to employ British forces on behalf of the League in repulsing the Bolsheviki in Persia. (This he regarded as more than improbable and of course, from our point of view, most undesirable.)

(b) to decide to boycott the Bolsheviki until they had withdrawn from Persia. He understood that H.M.G. had recently told M. Krassin that until the release of British officers, etc., further negotiations regarding commerce could not be entertained;⁶ why should not the League have equal courage and explain to the Bolsheviki that pending a settlement of the Enzeli business, they would adopt an attitude similar to that of Great Britain recently? His Highness remarked that in October last, even before Persia had become a member of the League, M. Clemenceau had officially invited Persia to participate in a blockade of Russia.⁷ There had been no compelling reason why Persia should agree to this, but she had naturally done so, and it would be ungrateful of the League now to ignore Persia's request.

(c) that the League should tell Persia that the affair at Enzeli was a domestic matter with which he had better deal direct with the Soviet. Should this be the reply, he would at least know where he stood.

His Highness added that should the League come to no decision it would prove itself in the eyes of the public here and elsewhere to be an entirely

³ Prince Firuz had just returned from a short private visit to Paris.

⁴ Cf. No. 444.

⁶ See Vol. XII, No. 698.

⁵ Cf. No. 452, n. 3.

⁷ See Vol. I, No. 69, minute 7.

useless organism; it was surely better to know now its impotency, than to go on for some time referring questions to the League only in the long run to find that it was useless.

Prince Firouz told me that the impression prevailing in France was one of considerable irritation, as it was there thought that Mr. Lloyd George had put the Persians up to calling for this meeting of the League in order to receive a mandate from it as regards British troops in Persia(!) and that at the meeting the French Representative might find himself in a minority.

I repeated my view that it was most unfortunate that the first meeting of the League was to be on a matter in which the plaintiff, i.e., Prince Firouz, might receive very little, if any, backing from the Council and that I could indeed have wished that the first case might have been on a subject regarding which unanimity would have been certain. I found however that His Highness was quite obdurate in acting on his instructions to apply to the League.

Prince Firouz had received a telegram from M. Tchicherin, of which he will send me a copy,⁸ and in which it is argued that as the Teheran Cabinet have not protested against the presence of British troops in Persia, it was not clear why they should protest against Soviet troops there. His Highness thought that it would be well that both we and the Persians should hold similar language as regards the presence of our troops and said that he would submit to me one or two formulas as soon as he had time to reflect on the matter.

With regard to the French attitude in Teheran,⁹ he had held very strong language with M. Millerand, who stated that he would look into the matter himself. The next day His Excellency had addressed to the Prince an official typed letter signed by himself, in which he said that so soon as the Persian Government had settled the Schneider claim, the attitude of French officials would improve!¹⁰

(I would explain that the Schneider question is a somewhat dubious claim for guns supplied to Muzaffar-ed-din Shah years ago and which the French Government have always maintained, but not pressed for many years past.)

His Highness proposes to take no action in the matter.

L. O., June 10

⁸ A French translation of this telegram of June 5 was received in the Foreign Office on June 11. The Russian text is printed as No. 373 in *D.V.P.S.S.R.*, vol. ii.

⁹ Cf. Nos. 448 and 449.

¹⁰ Sir E. Crowe here wrote in the margin: 'This is typically French; very maladroit.

E. C.'

No. 459

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 12, 9 a.m.)

No. 368 Telegraphic [203346/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 11, 1920, 6 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Shah displayed great nervousness yesterday regarding Bolshevik menace and begged that every effort should be made to save capital from invasion.

I said I believed there to be no immediate danger and hoped to be able to reassure His Majesty completely after consulting military authorities.

General Officer Commanding Norperforce states that as long as Bolshevik forces threatening Persia are not greatly increased he will be able to defend Teheran against them should they advance and I have asked Prime Minister to tell this to Shah.

General Officer Commanding would be glad however of another brigade; if this could be sent it would certainly have best effect on situation here.

General Officer Commanding Mesopotamia can however supply nothing more than one battery of howitzers for immediate use and unless on his return to Bagdad he finds the situation greatly improved will be unable to afford any further help at all. I accordingly hope that it may be found possible to reinforce troops in Mesopotamia to a small extent from India in order that a brigade may be available for service in Persia.

In the meantime Prime Minister has again expressed to me willingness of Persia to do her part in military operations as soon as she is provided with money and arms and he has once more emphasised extreme urgency of matter regarding which see my telegram No. 363.²

In reply to enquiry of mine he said that he could not tell me off hand what sum would be necessary but that in any case expenditure would be strictly controlled.

An early settlement of question is undoubtedly of utmost importance as if present situation is prolonged neither will present Government be able to remain in office nor will any other friendly to agreement be found willing to assume it.

Repeated to India and Bagdad for General Officer Commanding.

¹ See No. 461 below, n. 1.

² Of June 10, not printed.

No. 460

Lord Chelmsford to Mr. Montagu (Received June 14, 7.30 a.m.)¹

No. 720S Telegraphic [203977/165162/34]

Secret

June 11, 1920

Your telegram of 28th May last (received 6th June). Amir's letter to Shah.² We suggest reply might be somewhat on following lines:—

¹ A copy of this telegram was received in the Foreign Office from the India Office on June 16.

² See No. 447. The India Office telegram referred to appears to be No. P. 4265 of June 4

'It would in the opinion of my Government be inconvenient and mistaken policy confusing question of political relations between our two States by reference to religious considerations upon which, owing to their past history, it is unlikely views of Persia and Afghanistan could coincide. Apart from this, however, I welcome desire of neighbouring State, Afghanistan, to establish closer relations with my Government, and for that purpose I am willing to accept Sardar Abdul Aziz as Afghan Envoy. This acceptance should not be taken as indication of any desire on the part of Persia to forfeit advantage accruing to her under Treaty of 1857 (? between) Persia and Great Britain,³ under which latter is bound to undertake mediation between Persia and Afghanistan in the event of a conflict of views between them. As to suggestion that Persian representative should be sent to Kabul, I should prefer to wait for some time until present confused situation in Central Asia is clearer and until trend of policy of Afghanistan toward her powerful neighbours, Great Britain and Russia, has become more plain.'

Repeated to Teheran.⁴

(not printed) in which the Viceroy was asked for suggestions 'as to terms in which Shah should be advised to reply supposing he seeks advice of His Majesty's Government'.

³ For the text of this treaty see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 47, pp. 42-46.

⁴ In his telegram No. 376 of June 12 Mr. Norman said that the proposed reply 'appeared to meet requirements of case'. In Foreign Office telegram No. 333 of June 21 he was authorized to suggest it to the Persian Government.

No. 461

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 14, 9.55 a.m.)

No. 377 Telegraphic [203636/202/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 13, 1920, 11 a.m.

My telegram No. 367.¹

Prime Minister came here this morning to take leave of Sir P. Cox and after departure of latter he gave me an account of audience which he had yesterday of Shah in order to seek His Majesty's approval of measures which it is proposed to take to get rid of Russian officers of Cossack division.

His Highness said that he had used all arguments at his command in favour of plan, but, as he had expected, had totally failed to induce His Majesty to agree to it.

Shah on his part had once more put forward objections which he had advanced in his conversation with me viz. that it would be impossible to carry out project without bloodshed and that presence of foreign troops in capital would produce worst impression on public opinion. He had moreover refused to express any confidence in assurance conveyed to him from British military authorities that success of plan would be guaranteed by presence of seven hundred British soldiers.

¹ Of June 11, not printed. After Mr. Norman had presented his credentials on June 10 the Shah had received him in private audience. Their discussion of the problem of the Cossack division had been reported in this telegram.

His Majesty has asked me to see him at five p.m. to-day to discuss matter, and I shall of course do my best to convince him of feasibility and desirability of course which we advocate but I am far from confident of succeeding where Prime Minister has failed.²

Fact is that Shah is so very nervous about his personal safety that he is no longer accessible to argument.

Before leaving subject, Prime Minister told me in strictest confidence that Shah made to him yesterday following admission:—

Before leaving for Europe His Majesty had sent for Colonel Starosselsky and had enjoined on him to refuse obedience to any order given to him by Persian Government during Shah's absence to relinquish his command. Colonel was to adopt a (? similar) attitude towards an order conveyed to him by telegraph from Europe even if signed by Shah himself and if Persian Government tried to compel him to obey he was to resist by force.

Shah had, however, admitted to Prime Minister that he had since changed his mind and no longer wished to retain services of Russian officers and this agrees with statement which he has made to me on several occasions.

His Majesty's reluctance to telegraph from Europe to Starosselsky³ is thus explained.

Sent to India.

² As reported in his lengthy telegram No. 379 of June 14 (not printed), Mr. Norman's 'efforts to induce His Majesty at once to dismiss Colonel Starosselski were completely unsuccessful'.

³ See Nos. 414-16.

No. 462

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 15, 12.15 p.m.)

No. 378 Telegraphic [203918/150/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, June 13, 1920, 11.30 a.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Prime Minister spoke to me again this morning of increasing difficulty of position.

His Highness, who was extremely depressed and evidently feeling unwell, said that in spite of Shah's repeated assurances he could not but feel that he had lost His Majesty's confidence and even believed the Shah was in communication with enemies of Government.

One of the Shah's bitterest grievances against him concerns His Majesty's demand for reimbursement by Government of sums which he had spent out of his private means to defray expenses of his recent journey (see Sir P. Cox's telegram No. 356).² The Shah, who was extremely fond of money, returned to this question at every audience which he gave Prime Minister. His Majesty had even refused to accept a suggestion made by the latter that money should be reimbursed gradually and continued to insist on immediate payments.

¹ No. 461.

² No. 456.

Another grievance was Prime Minister's desire to be given discretion to arrest and deport persons he had good reason to believe to be plotting against Government with encouragement of certain foreign elements (see my telegram No. 371).³

I presume that he here referred to Russian officers and United States and French Legations. Shah always urged that a policy of repression only increased prevailing discontent—an observation which His Majesty has also made to me. Fear that public resentment may be turned against himself and his personal safety endangered is doubtless reason for this attitude.

In the circumstances, said Prime Minister, he felt he could not remain in office much longer, and must ask Shah to find another Government. He asked me to tell His Majesty of his intention this afternoon.

I promised to do so but said that I should add I had begged his Highness very earnestly not to resign at such a moment which I accordingly proceeded to do.

Prime Minister replied he did not wish to incur reproach of deserting his post at a moment when his country was in serious danger but apart from reasons in favour of resignation, which he had given me, there was also that of his health which he had not thoroughly regained since his recent illness. He was now physically unequal to work he had to do.

I asked his Highness whether it would not be possible to strengthen his Government and diminish volume of his work by inclusion of new elements. He replied he did not think this possible. Such statesmen as Mush[ir-ed-Dowleh] and Motamin-ul-Mulk⁴ had no personal objection to co-operate with himself but lacked courage required to face present crisis and to assume responsibility for its solution.

I said I had not meant to refer to such persons as two statesmen in question whom I understood to be already favourable to Anglo-Persian agreement but to individuals (whom I presumed to exist) who were opposed to it from honest and patriotic motives and who on that account might, if approached in the right way, be convinced of its utility and persuaded to work for it. If in his Highness' opinion I could do anything towards winning these elements to the side of Government, I was most willing to but I was well aware that the moment I got into communication with them I should be said and believed to be intriguing with them against Government.

His Highness said that such individuals existed and that he had endeavoured to win their support. He promised to reflect on my suggestion, but felt little hope I should succeed where he himself had tried and failed. He had always failed to understand objections of these people to agreement which they had never clearly stated.

I have no doubt that unpopularity of Government is largely due to its long continuance in power. Persians are accustomed to a rapid succession

³ Of June 11, not printed.

⁴ Mushir-ed-Dowleh, a moderate Nationalist, had been Prime Minister in 1915 and Minister of War in 1917-18; Motamin-ul-Mulk, his brother, had been Minister of Public Works in 1917-18.

of Cabinets, a system which gives to every politician in turn chance to enjoy fruits of office. Volume of complaints against those who have ruled country for so long therefore increases every day.

There are, however, (? as far as) I can judge after but a few days in this country, other and more respectable reasons for discontent.

Prime Minister, a conscientious worker, refuses to allow his time to be wasted, as he conceives it, by receiving visitors many of whom may really have something important to say. This causes resentment. He is averse from sharing Power with anybody and since resignation of late Minister of Finance and in absence of Minister for Foreign Affairs has presided over Cabinet which he has deliberately filled with his own relatives and dependents. These insignificant people are perhaps even more unpopular than their chief, who might greatly improve his position if he would consent to put in their place (? ordinary)⁵ men commanding more respect and confidence.

Finally Government is accused in some other quarters of sending to provinces officials quite unfit for posts assigned to them. One unfortunate, if merely incidental, result of this situation, if I am correctly informed, is that His Majesty's Government are largely to be blamed for misdeeds of a Government which they are known to support.

It may be possible to induce Prime Minister to retain office a little longer, but it will be so only if funds so often asked for are promptly provided.

Sent to India, Bagdad, North Persia force.

⁵ This word was not in the text as sent, which read: 'in their place men'.

No. 463

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 15, 5.30 p.m.)

No. 382 Telegraphic [203925/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 14, 1920, 5 p.m.

My telegram No. 380.¹

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs told me this morning that, in spite of what I said to Prime Minister yesterday His Highness persisted in resolve to resign.

His reasons were as follows:—

1. Bad health and weariness.
2. The reluctance of Minister of the Interior² to give him free hand which he had repeatedly demanded regarding measures to be taken to combat plots and intrigues and ensure maintenance of order.

¹ Of June 14, not printed. In this telegram Mr. Norman reported that on June 13 he had told the Shah of the Prime Minister's contemplated resignation and that the Shah had repeated his assurance that 'he was perfectly satisfied with Government though he realised their unpopularity in country'. He had authorized Mr. Norman to convey the renewed assurance of his confidence to the Prime Minister. This Mr. Norman did, as reported in his telegram No. 381 of June 14, not printed.

² In the Foreign Office it was suggested that this should read 'Shah'. The text as sent read 'Shah'.

3. The divergence of his views from those of the Shah on many questions e.g. that of dismissal of Cossack division and His Majesty's failure to give practical effect to his repeated assurances of his confidence in Government.
4. The impossibility of taking, in absence of immediate financial help, the necessary measures for defence of country.

I observed that as regards No. 2 and No. 3 I had done my best to persuade Shah, that as regards number 4 I was sparing no effort to obtain satisfaction from His Majesty's Government and I asked His Excellency once more to beg Prime Minister on my behalf to reconsider a decision which if carried out would nearly reduce me to despair.

I pointed out that His Highness had often threatened to resign on previous occasions but had always been persuaded to abandon his intentions and I asked whether his Excellency did not think same thing might happen this time.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that he could hold out no hope of such a solution. The Prime Minister's previous threats of resignation had been made during absence of Shah and he has been induced to remain in office by prospect held out to him that on His Majesty's return he would receive necessary support. Now however that Shah was back his Highness realised that this hope was an illusion so he had definitely decided to leave office.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs asked whether I had any advice to offer.

I replied I had for the moment only a suggestion to make. The Shah had certain reasons for wishing to retain the services of present Government (I referred to . . .³ supporting them) and if he could be made to see that he was really in danger of losing them he might be willing at last to give practical effect to his assurances. I advised Prime Minister to see His Majesty at once and explain that he was really in earnest.

I feel no confidence in this plan, even if Prime Minister consents to adopt it because Shah may refuse for fear of consequences to act as His Highness . . .⁴ decide to accept resignation of Government hoping to induce His Majesty's Government to continue subsidy by arguing that it would be unjust to deprive him of it because a Cabinet who have always enjoyed his full support have left office of their own free will.

I am to see Prime Minister to-morrow morning to discuss question after which his Highness will see Shah. I shall of course do my best to persuade His Highness to retain office.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs like Prime Minister complains that Shah was intriguing with leaders of opposition. His Majesty had no right to see these people without consent of his Highness whose position was greatly weakened by such proceedings which were known to everybody. His Excellency was evidently very sceptical of Shah's explanation that he received these people in order to convert them.

Sent to India and Bagdad and North Persia Force.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: '(I referred of course to the monthly subsidy which H.M. receives for supporting them)'. Cf. Nos. 464 and 485 below.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'as His Highness desires as regards points (2) and (3) and may'.

*Memorandum on the Persian Question*¹

[204900/150/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 14, 1920

The Department are required, it is understood, to submit notes, for the Secretary of State's consideration, on the possible results in Persia of a withdrawal of all British troops from that country to railhead, and a cessation of military, financial and other assistance to the Government in Tehran, (which would inevitably bring about the collapse of the Anglo-Persian agreement of 1919). As an alternative, the minima desiderata considered necessary from the political point of view, to ensure the continuance of Persia as a separate organised entity and the maintenance of our position there.

The prime objects of the agreement concluded on the 9th August last are set forth in the accompanying extracts of Lord Curzon's pronouncements. . . .²

From the above quotations from Lord Curzon's statements it appears obvious that to withdraw British forces from Persia and to shut down supplies, thereby stultifying the agreement, would, in present circumstances, produce almost certainly the following results.

1. The Bolsheviks, who are reported to have already turned a part of the province of Ghilan into a Red republic (see Tehran telegram No. 361 of June 10th)³ may be expected to spread their virus into Tehran and other parts of northern Persia, whose unruly elements would fall an easy prey to Bolshevik propaganda.

The present pro-British cabinet of Vossug at [sic] Dowleh would fall and, thereupon, the agreement would inevitably collapse while, in the opinion of H.M. Minister at Tehran, no other government friendly to the agreement would be found willing to replace it (Tehran telegram No. 368).⁴

While the deposition of the Shah, which would in all probability ensue, might not in itself be a regrettable incident, on the other hand a Soviet form of republic, if introduced into Persia, would tend to disintegration. The ensuing chaos would inevitably necessitate the abandonment of various British institutions, while the British Legation and consulates throughout Persia would have to be withdrawn, if the analogy of Russia were followed.

2. The probable direct result of increased confusion in Persia would be that our position in Mesopotamia would be threatened at once, and the possibility of maintaining ourselves as far up as Bagdad even would be a matter for earnest consideration.

3. An indirect and most probable, though perhaps not immediate, result would be that the state of disorder and troubles in Persia would centre on the

¹ This memorandum was submitted by Mr. Oliphant of the Central European and Persia Department of the Foreign Office.

² Here followed (a) an extract from Lord Curzon's memorandum of Aug. 9, 1919, printed as No. 710 in Vol. IV, and (b) extracts from his speech at the Carlton Hotel on Sept. 18, 1919; see No. 375, n. 8.

³ No. 457.

⁴ No. 459.

east in general, beginning with Afghanistan and the Baluchistan border with a consequent risk of its spreading to India.

Hitherto H.M.G. have pursued a definite policy as regards Persia, i.e., the strengthening of that country (even if as much in our own as in Persian interests) and for this purpose have been put to very great expense. A reversal of the attitude hitherto adopted would inevitably result in the complete waste of these monies, while being open to the criticism that to abandon a country, with whom, only last year, a definite agreement was made, could not but spread a spirit of mistrust in the minds of any other nations with whom it was our intention to come to some solid understanding.

Should it, therefore, be decided to continue our previous policy, certain further expenditure as may be required for military measures, and for supporting the Persian Government politically, would appear to be the following:—

1. that such forces as, in the opinion of the military authorities, may be required to strengthen our present lines in Persia from railhead at Quraitu to Kazvin should be supplied,

2. that such funds as are required to assist the Persian Government may be sanctioned. They would be (a) to maintain the administration which has recently received the assistance of a British financial adviser, i.e., continuance of monthly subsidy of Tomans 350,000 until September next: (b) to assist in counteracting Bolshevik propaganda.

3. to enable Persian forces, as suggested by the Persian Minister and persistently supported by Sir P. Cox, to proceed from Kerman to Isfahan and thence to Azerbaijan.

At present our main financial support to the Cabinet at Teheran consists (1) of a monthly payment of Tomans 350,000 which was due to cease this month, but which on the urgent representations of the Financial Adviser backed by Sir P. Cox, the Foreign Office have pressed the Treasury and India Office to continue in full (not, as desired by the Treasury, in diminishing proportions) till September.⁵ The India Office have already agreed. (2) of a monthly payment of Tomans 15,000 to the Shah so long as he maintains Vossug-ed-Dowleh in office and gives him loyal support, and (3) a payment of Tomans 100,000 a month for the upkeep of the Cossack Division. It was decided many weeks ago to cut off this subsidy, leaving the Division to be paid out of Tomans 60,000 a month found by the Persian Government, but Sir P. Cox, who paid the May instalment without sanction, has continued to press that the payment should not be discontinued at once. (4) The upkeep of our troops in Khorassan is estimated to have cost us £6,000,000 a year, but orders for their recall have been given,⁶ and expenditure under this heading may shortly come to an end.

From the above it appears that if we cease all financial help to the Persian Government—and this would presumably be the case if Bolsheviks overran Northern Persia and a friendly Government no longer remained in power

⁵ See Nos. 420, 428, and 432.

⁶ See No. 443.

at the capital,—the saving would amount *at once* to £230,000 a month, or say £3,000,000 a year, though as the subsidy of Tomans 350,000 a month is due to cease in September, this is a maximum estimate and allows for a hypothetical continuance of that item beyond September.

Apart from the above sums, economies are being effected in the upkeep of the South Persia Rifles and the Persian Government may, it is hoped, take the force over shortly.

The Department have no data for estimating the cost of the Norperforce.

It is submitted that while the above expenditure is certainly heavy, the risks to Mesopotamia and India, should Bolshevism overrun Persia, would be of such a nature as to outweigh the present commitments. Were it decided to support the present Government we may estimate that the Cabinet at Teheran would need our aid to the extent already given and in addition would require a financial advance to enable them to move forces from Kerman to Isfahan and thence to Azerbaijan. Besides this, funds would be needed for the purpose of counteracting Bolshevik propaganda in Persia.

During the Turkish menace of 1918, a cordon of British troops was placed from Kermanshah and Hamadan to Resht.

If this cordon be completely removed by the withdrawal of troops to rail-head, the Persian forces destined for Azerbaijan would presumably endeavour to replace them, even though in a far less satisfactory manner. Politically, were Azerbaijan to be lost to Persia, the rest of the country would certainly be exposed to the reaction resulting therefrom, and this risk has been repeatedly emphasised by the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs in conversation here.

It is therefore apparent that if H.M.G. continue to help the Persian Government, the desirability of affording them help in the matter of Azerbaijan will be very great. On the other hand, to close down, cut our losses and leave Persia will inevitably expose that country and Asia to the dangers foretold by Lord Curzon nearly a year ago⁷ which are daily becoming more menacing.

⁷ In his speech on Sept. 18, 1919, cf. n. 2 above.

No. 465

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 18, 12 noon)

No. 388 Telegraphic [204587/150/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, June 15, 1920, 5 p.m.

Prime Minister showed me this morning long telegram from Russian Soviet Government which reached Teheran last night. It was dated June 4th [5th] and addressed to Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs who had received it on June 8th¹ and was reply to telegram of remonstrance addressed by Persian Government to Soviet Government regarding proceedings of Bolsheviks at Resht.²

¹ See No. 458, n. 8.

² For these proceedings see No. 457.

As Sir P. Cox has doubtless communicated text of both telegrams to you, I do not repeat it here.

Prime Minister said that he had received last night important deputation of Persian Merchants who were nervous regarding a Bolshevik advance into Persian territory and that to calm them he had shown them this telegram.

In order to reassure public he wished also to let it appear in press and he asked me to consent to this on condition that a note was appended categorically denying certain damaging and false statements which it contained regarding action of British troops in Persia.

I said on that condition I had no objection to publication of telegram.³

I do not know whether it is true as asserted . . .⁴ Persian territory, but I hope to find this out in a few days.

Prime Minister added that according to his information there were no longer any Bolshevik troops in region of Astara and Ardebil.

Sent to India, Baghdad, Norperforce.

³ Mr. Norman's action was approved in Foreign Office telegram No. 335 of June 22, not printed.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'in the telegram that all Bolshevik troops have left'.

No. 466

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 17, 1.30 p.m.)

No. 387 Telegraphic [204362/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 15, 1920, 6 p.m.

My telegram No. 382.¹

Prime Minister spoke to me this morning about his position and we went over whole question again at great length. His Highness is to see Shah this afternoon and is determined to lay before His Majesty four reasons for resignation which Minister for Foreign Affairs communicated to me yesterday. He promised however at my earnest request to take no irreparable step till views of His Majesty's Government are known here.

He undertook also to tell me result of his audience of Shah. It is hard to forecast line which His Majesty will take but I expect that he will try to retain Prime Minister's services while avoiding explicit guarantees of confidence which his Highness demands as a condition of retaining office. I think this attempt will be unsuccessful. There are also Prime Minister's first and third points to be considered with which Shah is not concerned. His Highness's health is no doubt seriously impaired and even if it were not he would probably refuse to continue in power without financial help from His Majesty's Government which he considers indispensable.

I shall of course do my utmost in every way to keep present Government in power, till instructed to desist from attempt, but at the same time my personal opinion is that owing to detestation, in which for reasons already

¹ No. 463.

explained in my telegram No. 380² they are now held, Prime Minister has outlived his usefulness to His Majesty's Government and that British policy would have a far better chance of success with another Cabinet in office. What is required in my opinion is a Prime Minister who would be able to win honest opponents of agreement whose objections to it are due to an imperfect comprehension of its purpose and if necessary to include some of them in his cabinet. These (? people) would indeed require in return for their cooperation certain changes to be introduced into that instrument, notably a clause limiting its duration. I see no objection to such a clause or to an exchange of notes to the effect that at the end of say 20 years two Governments will consider whether its renewal is necessary.

It is also of great importance to regularise the situation by summoning Parliament in order to give legal force to the agreement. This should have been done long ago and every day's delay in doing it, damages further Parliamentary prospects of agreement because members already elected and waiting in capital with notice . . .³ are increasingly subject to hostile influences.

A new Government which at first, at any rate, would be free from unpopularity of present one, who would be able to summon Parliament without feeling fear of possible consequences which prevents present one from doing so, would, if business were properly managed, probably have a good chance of obtaining a vote of confidence and get⁴ agreement through. It must be however remembered that unless immediate financial help is provided by His Majesty's Government it will be difficult, if not impossible, to induce any friendly statesmen to take office.

Speaking of possible successors to himself should he finally decide to resign, the Prime Minister mentioned name of present Minister for Foreign Affairs and, if he were thought too young to form a Cabinet, that of latter's father⁵ who would, of course, have support of his son, but I need not now discuss these . . .⁶ second of which does not at first sight for several reasons seem very happy.

In reply to an enquiry of mine he saw⁷ that neither Mushir-ed-Dowleh nor his brother Motamin-ul-Mulk would consent to take office.

Sent to India. Repeated to Bagdad Norperforce.

² The reference is probably to No. 462 (Mr. Norman's No. 378) rather than to his No. 380 (see No. 463, n. 1) which does not give reasons for the Government's unpopularity.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'with nothing to do'.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'and getting the Agreement through'.

⁵ Prince Farman Farma, Governor of Fars, and formerly Prime Minister (1915-16).

⁶ The text received was here uncertain: as sent it read 'suggestions'.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'he said'.

No. 467

Record of a conversation between Lord Hardinge and M. Cambon

[204652/192904/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 16, 1920

The French Ambassador called this afternoon. . . .¹

I then reminded M. Cambon of the conversation you² had held with him on the 2nd June [May 31] regarding the proceedings of the French Minister at Tehran,³ and I said that you would be very glad to know what action the French Government proposed to take in connection therewith. M. Cambon replied that he had given a full account of what you had said to him to the French Government, who were presumably in correspondence with M. Bonin on the subject. I thereupon gave M. Cambon a few instances showing M. Bonin's hostile attitude which had occurred since the date of your interview. I told M. Cambon that you regarded the matter very seriously; that this hostility on M. Bonin's part had already lasted for more than a year, and that, although I was quite well aware that satisfactory instructions had been sent to him by the French Government, he seems to have paid no attention whatsoever to them. There was no denying the hostility of his attitude, and that around him were grouped hostile elements to England and to the Anglo-Persian Agreement. That this should be the attitude of the representative of one of the Allies in a neutral capital was intolerable, and from this point of view you regarded it as a serious matter.

M. Cambon replied that he would inform his Government of what I had said, but was quite unable to express an opinion upon the truth of the accusations made against M. Bonin, but he mentioned to me that he himself had been dissatisfied with him when employed in some other capacity, and that he was aware that at his previous post, Cairo, M. Bonin had not given entire satisfaction to his Chief.

H.

¹ The remainder of this paragraph related to the reference of the Aaland Islands dispute to the League of Nations (see Vol. XI, No. 297).

² Lord Curzon, for whom this record was made.

³ See No. 448.

No. 468

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 19, 1.20 p.m.)

No. 392 Telegraphic [204772/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 18, 1920, 11 a.m.

I have now had time to examine situation and in view of its gravity think it my duty to submit my conclusions to your Lordship without further delay.

In spite of my own inexperience I do this without hesitation because having now consulted heads of Financial and Military Commissions and such members of my staff as have long experience of Persia I find that my opinions though formed quite independently of them entirely agree with theirs.

The prospects of success of British policy in Persia which for some months after signature of Persian Agreement were favourable have since gradually become less so and are now very bad indeed.

Government who concluded that arrangement have for reasons explained in my telegram No. 382¹ become intensely unpopular and their unpopularity is to a great extent shared by Great Britain without whose continued support they would it is realised have fallen long ago.

We are now identified with most autocratic elements in country and have lost confidence of those who *call* themselves Nationalist Democrats or something else and are our natural friends since they owe constitution to us and who form moreover the only more or less organised party in country.

We are in fact gradually drifting into position formerly occupied in public estimation by Russia.

We are in the meantime also alienating sympathies of other sections notably rich reactionary landowners by our failure to carry on what they regard as our moral obligations towards Persia in the matter of her defence.

Our abandonment of control over Caspian Sea and withdrawal of our troops from Azerbaijan and Gilan have made worst impression on all Persians and have encouraged belief that we propose abandonment of whole northern (? mainland)² to any invader. I have already often had difficulty in convincing Persians that we are even able or willing to defend approaches to capital and indeed with troops at present at our disposal we could not stop an advance on it from any direction save those at Tabriz and Resht and if enemy were numerous not even then.

We have thus not even the reputation for energy and determination formerly enjoyed by hated Russians and when our intention to withdraw our force from Meshed becomes known confidence in our efficiency not to speak of our good faith will be still further shaken.

Persia is indeed quite willing to take those measures in her own defence of which she is capable but she cannot do even that without further help from us in money, arms, munitions of war and equipment. Her request for this help was made a month ago,³ and absence of a reply has produced a feeling of deep depression. If it is not afforded it will be impossible on fall of present Government to induce any Statesman to form another.

Result will be complete anarchy gradually spreading over whole country and probably followed by Bolshevik penetration which will naturally fill void left by our own enforced retirement.

His Majesty's Government will then have to decide whether they will allow all the money sunk in Persia to be lost, our commerce destroyed, our interests and position in country ruined, policy represented by agreement scrapped, Mesopotamia rendered untenable and our hold on India jeopardized or whether they will regain at a huge expense in money and in men what might now be preserved at a comparatively small cost if only immediate action were taken.

¹ No. 463; but the reference should probably be to Tehran telegram No. 378 (No. 462).

² This word read 'Persia' in the text as sent.

³ See No. 438.

I am submitting in my two immediately following telegrams⁴ views of heads of Financial and Military Commissions which I entirely share.

From these it will be seen that neither in money nor in men are the . . .⁵ dilemmas of situation so great as might be expected and that if they are promptly met time which must elapse before good results begin to appear need not be long.

With immediate help I am convinced situation can be saved.

Though I realise at least some of difficulties with which His Majesty's Government have to contend in dealing with this question and fact that Persia is not their only preoccupation in view of immense interests involved I would most earnestly beg for early and favourable consideration of this plea.

Moreover though it is true that by agreement we give no specific undertaking to defend Persia surely we are under a moral obligation to make every effort to do so. Failure to honour it would inflict nearly as heavy a blow on our prestige throughout the East and increase difficulties of our position there almost as much as would our ignominious expulsion from this country.

Repeated Bagdad, Norperforce.

⁴ Nos. 470 and 469 below. These telegrams were despatched in reverse order.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'the minimum requirements of situation'.

No. 469

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 21, 9.15 a.m.)

No. 394 Telegraphic [204984/150/34]

TEHRAN, June 18, 1920, 1.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 392.¹

Following is a summary of views of Head of Military Commission.

He believes it will be admitted that we are morally bound for the present to assist Persia against external enemies and unless we fulfil this obligation we cannot expect her with insufficient forces at her disposal to make any serious efforts to repel Bolsheviks for by doing so she would only arouse them to greater activity.

The only loyal and efficient troops in Persia at present are South Persia Rifles. Gendarmerie, the next best body, are untrained for anything but simple police duties.

Cossacks are slightly better drilled but their discipline is a by-word and attitude of their Russian officers is such as to render it necessary to maintain other troops to watch them. Special circumstances have just rendered it possible to employ them against Kuchik Khan in Gilan (see my telegram No. 391)² but this does not affect general question of their loyalty.

¹ No. 468.

² Of June 17, not printed. In this telegram Mr. Norman had reported the surrender in Gilan of a detachment of Persian Cossacks who had been attacked by 'Bolsheviks' and his own approval of the Prime Minister's proposal to accede to Col. Starosselski's request to lead a force of 4,000 Cossacks against the aggressors.

Central Brigade of which British officers have only just taken charge have not up to now even seen a rifle. Personal troops of provincial Governors might be left out of consideration.

Persian Government have not yet come to a decision on report of Military Commission presented over two months ago³ and after a decision has been reached six months must elapse before troops will be available under British officers for Military operations.

Internal military problems in Persia at present are:—

1. Disorder in Luristan.
2. Rebellion in Azerbaijan.
3. Rebellion of Kuchik Khan in Gilan and
4. Rebellion in Mazanderan.

(1) is being dealt with by local Governor who must be left to do the best he can for the present.

It may be possible to suppress (2) without resort to arms; it is proposed to send a force of 4,000 Cossacks against (3) and a force of Gendarmes is employed in Mazanderan.

External Military problems are Bolshevik menace in North and North East Persia and possible Turkish or Bolshevik incursions into Persian Azerbaijan.

British force in Eastern Persia viz. two Battalions, 1 regiment of cavalry and a Mountain Battery at Meshed besides troops on line of communication to Duzdap is sufficient to deal with any incursion that Bolsheviks are likely to be in a position to make from Transcaspia. (I strongly urge retention of this force withdrawal of which would invite attack on Persia and would rightly be regarded as breach of faith on our part.) Bolshevik menace in Northern Persia is more serious. Bolsheviks have complete command of Caspian Sea and can prepare secretly and in security a descent on any part of its coast. Their objective may be either Kasvin or Tehran. Kasvin can be reached by three well defined routes as well as indirectly by way of Zinjan and Tehran can be reached directly from Caspian by three other routes. There will thus be required detachments on each of seven routes and a strong central striking force ready to move to point of attack. Persian troops stiffened by our own might be used in some positions and for seven detachments 2,000 Persian gendarmes backed by two Indian battalions a cavalry regiment and a mountain battery would be required.

For striking force, a mixed brigade of four infantry battalions (two British) one Indian cavalry regiment and one horse and one howitzer battery.

This force could not prevent landings, but could defeat invaders and throw them back into the sea.

Azerbaijan situation had better be left alone until menace from Caspian is dealt with.

It is to be hoped that Cossacks may be successful against Kuchik Khan, but their success might provoke a Bolshevik descent on the coast and for

³ See No. 403.

expulsion of invaders, forces named above should be sufficient. I have not had chance to consult with General Officer Commanding Norperforce before despatching this telegram but it will be seen that reinforcements with which it is proposed that he should be furnished amount roughly to brigade which he named as his minimum requirement when he was here recently. According to my latest information General Officer Commanding Mesopotamia is unable to furnish this force unless himself reinforced from India.

Since my arrival here I have thrice urged Prime Minister to secure immediate adoption by Cabinet of report of Military Commission, and His Highness has promised to do so. Only this morning Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs assured me that it would be done. I am anxious on the subject because if Government fall without having taken action long delay is inevitable.

Sent to India, Bagdad and Norperforce.

No. 470

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 19, 10.35 a.m.)

No. 393 Telegraphic [204748/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 18, 1920, 5 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

I give financial adviser's opinion in his words:

'There is no budget in Persia: for year² Government has been living from hand to mouth meeting constant deficits from British subsidy and loans from bank. In circumstances any statement of financial position must be largely conjectural.

'But according to best conjecture which I can form there is a deficit at Treasury of tomans 500,000 now and a cumulative deficit of tomans 250,000 a month.

'Corruption and nepotism are universal and there are few honest and capable officials.

'Central Government cannot control its provincial agents effectively or coerce power of individuals who refuse to pay their taxes. At present moment three of richest provinces have passed from control of Central Government.

'Reform of financial and administrative³ but especially the latter is long overdue; continuance of present chaos would assuredly lead to anarchy and no Government of whatever political complexion could possibly carry on without external help during interval which must elapse before reforms can yield practical results.

'Position however desperate is not lost.

'I have received from moment of my arrival fullest and most sympathetic support from Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Council of Ministers

¹ No. 468.

² The text as sent from Tehran read 'years'.

³ The text as sent read: 'Reform, financial and administrative, but'.

in my efforts to increase revenue and decrease expenditure and I am confident that, with continuance of this support, I can succeed in restoring Persia to solvency within a comparatively short period subject to three conditions.

'First. Disintegration [*sic*] of empire which has begun must be stopped by force of arms.

'Second. Government must be supplied with funds to meet difference between maximum revenue to be obtained and minimum of inevitable expenses of administration.

'Third. I must have skilled assistance for which I have asked (Garbett and Hobart).⁴

'I began effective work on May 5th. I anticipate tangible results in second half of current financial year. In view of existing chaos it is not reasonable to anticipate results earlier.

'Financial assistance should be given subject to my control; unless such assistance is given during dangerous interval before reforms can take effect, and while there is rebellion in North and extraordinary military expenses are continued, Agreement and British influence in Persia and vast sums already spent here during war are all lost together.

'If such assistance is given Persia can be restored to solvency and financial basis of stability of Government can be laid securely and without long delay.'

Persian Government are perfectly willing to submit to any system of control which we may wish to impose so that all danger of misuse of money is eliminated.

Sent to India and to Bagdad and Norperforce by post.

⁴ Mr. C. C. Garbett was an Assistant Secretary in the India Office and Major P. C. S. Hobart a General Staff Officer at the War Office.

No. 471

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 327 Telegraphic [203907/202/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 19, 1920, 3.30 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 379 and 381 (of June 14th.¹ Cossack Division).

In present circumstances the passage in my telegram No. 153 (of March 22nd) regarding Starosselsky and the Cossack Division appears to be appropriate.² As the Shah will not dismiss Starosselsky as he undertook to do, and as Starosselsky is not wanted here, the only alternative is to reduce the force to the numbers that can be maintained on the Persian Government's contribution of Tomans 60,000. In any case no further subsidy whatever will be paid out of British funds for the Division.

¹ Not printed.

² No. 395.

No. 472

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 330 Telegraphic [204888/150/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 19, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegrams 363¹ and 367.²

Movement of troops to Azerbaijan is clearly for purpose of 'preservation of order in Persia and on its frontiers' and as such would come within Clause 3 of the Anglo-Persian Agreement of last year. In these circumstances and in view of pressure of time you may, if financial adviser agrees, inform Persian Government that necessary money will be placed at their disposal immediately out of the loan, to cover expenditure in question.

Whole question of Persian finance will be subsequently considered after arrival in this country of Sir P. Cox who will doubtless be in full possession of financial adviser's impressions.

¹ Of June 10, not printed.

² See No. 461, n. 1.

No. 473

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 21, 2.30 p.m.)

No. 399 Telegraphic [205025/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *June 19, 1920, 9 p.m.*

My telegram No. 397.¹

Financial Adviser whom I saw this morning points out that though it is doubtless quite feasible for His Majesty's Government to insist that he should control expenditure of June instalment this would not prevent Shah from drawing sum which he demands from funds equivalent to amount freed by payment of subsidy and beyond reach of any control. Suggestion made in ultimate paragraph of my telegram is therefore futile.

I have since again seen Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and have once more begged him to explain to Prime Minister that if His Majesty's Government learn that he has allowed Shah to help himself to part of subsidy which they had intended for current needs of administration they will certainly never again consent to supply Persian Government with money till control of its expenditure is assured. I added that His Highness had better find way of making this clear to His Majesty.

In the circumstances I have not availed myself of authority conveyed to me by your telegram of to-day² because if subsidy were paid at once sum demanded by Shah would be immediately handed over to him. As it is I hope to ensure its expenditure on proper objects. His Majesty has asked me to see him to-morrow afternoon. If he mentions subject on that occasion

¹ See No. 476 below, n. 5.

² Foreign Office telegram No. 328, not printed: this authorized Mr. Norman to pay on account of the June instalment the sum of 262,500 tomans.

I shall speak plainly to him and try to bring him to better frame of mind. If not Prime Minister will doubtless contrive to convey my warning to His Majesty. In any case I hope to frighten him into withdrawing his demand. Sent to India.

No. 474

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 23, 5.10 p.m.)

No. 401 Telegraphic [205497/150/34]

TEHRAN, June 20, 1920, 3.15 p.m.

My telegram No. 400.¹

Financial Adviser has just been to see me and says that situation is even worse than he thought, in that deficit now amounts to 8(50,000?) tomans apart from recurrent deficit of 250,000 tomans a month.

He nevertheless quite agrees with me that it is inexpedient for me to allow subsidy to be paid till I have made sure that Shah will not get part of it² . . . s³ nor any equivalent sum from any other source.

At the same time 5,000 tomans is required tomorrow to pay Central Brigade and I propose to arrange with Imperial Bank of Persia to provide that amount subject to my undertaking that overdraft thus produced will be promptly wiped out.

Sent to India.

¹ No. 477 below.

² See No. 473.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'which he demands'.

No. 475

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 21, 2.25 p.m.)

No. 398 Telegraphic [205039/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 20, 1920, 9 p.m.

Message was spontaneously conveyed to me yesterday from Nationalist Party through head of British Military Commission who knows some of their leaders, to the effect that they are willing to form a Government who will carry on support of¹ Anglo-Persian agreement and get it through Parliament.

I explained to General Dickson that policy of His Majesty's Government precluded me from sending any reply to this communication and still more from entering into relations with Nationalists.

He replied that he believed this to be understood and no such action on my part to be expected.

I shall report further as soon as possible but for various reasons abstain for the moment from all comment.

Sent to India and to Bagdad and Kasvin by post.

¹ The text as sent from Tehran read: 'will undertake to support'.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 23, 11 a.m.)

No. 404 Telegraphic [205498/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 20, 1920¹

My telegram No. 400.²

At my audience with Shah this afternoon I led conversation to subject of finance and emphasised gravity of situation as presented to me this morning by Financial Adviser pointing out that all salaries were a month in arrears.

I said that I was trying to induce His Majesty's Government to pay subsidy for the present month but that their past experience made them afraid lest money should not be applied to objects for which it was intended, that is current needs of administration. Now that Financial Adviser was at work it might be hoped that all occasion for such fears would disappear and I begged His Majesty not to lend any countenance to attempts to divert money from its proper purposes. Shah, who did not appear impressed by what I had said, replied that he knew nothing of finances of his country but would certainly comply with my request to the best of his ability. There was however one sum which ought legitimately to come out of subsidy, and which Prime Minister had promised to draw from that source, and that was amount necessary to repay him . . .³ journey.

He asked me whether Prime Minister had mentioned matter to me and I replied, as I was bound to do, that he had not and that I had been led to raise question solely by report which I had received from Financial Adviser. Shah then told me his own version of story according to which Persian Government had from beginning promised him to repay all expenses of his journey . . .⁴ of which promise he had not restricted his expenditure, reduced his suite and cut short his stay in Europe, as he would have done had he foreseen that the present difficulty would arise.⁵ Fact that he had stayed so long abroad was not his fault for he had repeatedly asked to be allowed to return home. If he did not have money at once he would be in despair because he needed it not for himself but to repay debts contracted in Europe which he could not meet out of his small private fortune.

I begged him most earnestly in view of serious situation to make sacrifice for his country by giving Prime Minister his promise back and withdrawing his demands, or at least agreeing to delay of a few months, till national finances were in a sounder state. I added that if His Majesty's Government consented to pay subsidy this month and then learnt, as they must, that

¹ The hour of despatch is not recorded.

² No. 477.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'the expenses of his'.

⁴ The text as received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'on the strength of which'.

⁵ In his telegram No. 397 of June 19 (not printed) Mr. Norman had reported that the Persian Prime Minister had agreed to reimburse the Shah the sum he had spent on his journey abroad out of his pocket, paying half at once out of the subsidy of 350,000 tomans due for the current month and half in ten days' time.

part of it had been used to meet this claim, however legitimate it might be in ordinary circumstances, that [*sic*] they would certainly refuse to afford any further financial help in future . . .⁶ if that happened I could not answer for consequences to this country.

This warning produced no effect and though I argued for an hour . . .⁷ I entirely failed to convince Shah. The only concession which he would make was to say that subsidy should be left intact if His Majesty's Government advance at the same time an additional sum sufficient to meet his own claim.

Amount was essential to him, but a mere trifle to His Majesty's Government.

I said His Majesty's Government would not take that view and that I could hold out little hope that they would consent to such a course.

Prime Minister's unfortunate and unexpected weakness thus introduces into an already difficult situation a further problem, of which for the moment I see no solution, since appeals, arguments and warnings have proved equally futile. I propose however to make a further appeal in writing to Shah.

In the meantime I propose reduced subsidy⁸ sanctioned by your telegram No. 628 of June 17th received⁹ which supersedes your telegram No. 326.¹⁰

It is fortunate that question raised by Shah's demand prevented me from acting promptly on latter, as I should otherwise have done.

Sent to India.

⁶ The text as received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'to Persia. If that'.

⁷ The text as received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'and a half'.

⁸ The text as sent read: 'I propose to retain reduced subsidy'.

⁹ The text as sent read: 'your telegram No. 328 just received'; see No. 473, n. 2.

¹⁰ Of June 18, not printed.

No. 477

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 23, 11.30 a.m.)

No. 400 Telegraphic [205496/150/34]

TEHRAN, June 21, 1920, 8.30 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram¹ paragraph one.

Financial Adviser spoke to me yesterday² on general question of his powers under the Anglo-Persian agreement which many people here whose opinion is worth considering regard as insufficient and asked me to report his remarks to His Majesty's Government.

They are as follows:

'Question of making control over expenditure a condition of continuance of monthly subsidy wholly or in part is one of extreme difficulty.

'Need for subsidy arises from fact that the Government spends more than

¹ No. 473.

² i.e. June 19. This telegram was drafted on June 20.

it receives. Result is a deficit and His Majesty's Government are asked to supply this deficit.

'Now it might be possible to elaborate some system by which expenditure of given sum, say tomans 350,000, were subjected to control; but this would be useless because whilst that given sum was being properly expended on legitimate purposes whole of residue of expenditure of the State might be improperly expended, and would be *ex-hypothesi* subject to no control.

'Conclusion which I have come to is that it is useless to earmark a particular kind of expenditure and to control that alone. What we want is general control e.g., if tobacco and opium revenue had been properly administered they would have produced about enough to wipe out this existing deficit. On the other hand if certain kinds of expenditure (especially mensualites i.e. monthly bribes paid to critics of Government to silence their opposition) which are in fact illegal had not been sanctioned deficit and amount of British subsidy required would be *pro tanto* decreased.

'In a word subsidy may be well spent, but need for a subsidy at all might disappear with honest administration and financial reform.

'For these reasons I find it useless to ask for a complete control over a given sum.

'What I want is general control over all expenditure and over revenue administration.

'Here again a difficulty arises. So far I have had full support of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers.

'To ask for *powers* of control when all my *advice* has been accepted appears ungracious.

'Further, moment seems to be inopportune, for any powers granted to me now by Cabinet may be revoked by Medjliss: indeed the less my existing powers the more likely is that body to acquiesce in my presence and the more power is it likely to give me of its own free will when we revert to a constitutional régime. I hope that régime will soon come into force for a permanent financial reform is hopeless without a Parliament.

'Conclusions which I draw are two:

'1. A continuance of subsidy is essential unless Persia is to relapse into anarchy and necessity for this continuance is result of existing maladministration.

'2. Maladministration must be gradually ended and reforms gradually introduced, and to secure adoption of reforms I must continue to rely on such power as I am able to obtain by personal influence so long as present régime continues: but when there is a constitutional régime and my presence has been definitely accepted then continuance of subsidy might be made conditional upon grant by Government with the approval of Medjliss of some real power of control.

'But I fear that, however necessary, a successful demand now would impair my usefulness hereafter.'

My knowledge of the country and of Persian character is still too imperfect

to enable me to express opinion of any value on the question whether it is sound policy to abstain from making definite demand for general powers of control or at any rate to postpone such a demand till Parliament has met but I am disposed to consider such a course judicious because so far all the Financial Adviser's numerous recommendations have been accepted and because so far as I can gather from those Persians with whom I had discussed him (including Prime Minister), tact, sincerity and firmness with which Adviser is handling situation have made best impression and inspired confidence in him so that it is probable that his advice will continue to be taken.

In any case I entirely agreed³ with him in believing that if our policy in Persia is to succeed, (1) a subsidy must continue to be paid for some months longer and (2) Parliament must be summoned as soon as possible.

I may add that these are conclusions of every disinterested person whom I have consulted.

Sent to India.

³ This word read 'agree' in the text as sent from Tehran.

No. 478

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 23, 9.30 a.m.)

No. 406 Telegraphic [205405/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 21, 1920¹

My telegram No. 404.²

I told the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning what had passed between the Shah and (? Russo-Chinese Bank)³ regarding financial situation and His Majesty's demand for repayment of his travelling expenses out of subsidy for current month.

His Excellency said that Persian Government had never promised His Majesty to pay all those expenses, but only to do so up to a certain limit.

. His Majesty's plea of poverty was absolutely false for he had many millions invested in European banks.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs approved any⁴ suggestion to reinforce by a written appeal arguments which I had used orally but warned me if I thwarted the Shah where questions of money were concerned I should permanently alienate his sympathy and lead him to work against me. My position would then become impossible unless I had support of a strong Government here.

I said on this occasion it was my plain duty to thwart him and that I had indeed no choice in the matter. I would however word my letter carefully. I added that in my personal opinion Parliament offered only means of restraining Shah. His Excellency agreed.

¹ The hour of despatch is not recorded.

² No. 476.

³ The text as sent read: 'me yesterday'.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'my'.

No. 479

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 23, 10 a.m.)

No. 407 Telegraphic [205499/150/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, June 22, 1920, 12.30 p.m.

Following communicated to me by Financial Advisor [*sic*].

Agreement stands or falls with financial reform. For this a Parliament and popular support are essential at once. Personally I have received fullest sympathy and support from Persian Ministers but the whole system of Government requires fundamental change. Present system, in absence of moral and material force, relies on bribery and repression. This drains the Exchequer and creates more discontent than it stifles. British Government is associated in popular estimation, and rightly so, with autocracy and corruption.

I have no fear of lack of support and anticipate extensive . . . (? increased)¹ powers of control from strong popular Government in which present Minister of Finance would remain but there is no time to be lost if the agreement is to be saved from [the inevitable]² downfall of those who have fathered it here.

Bribery and propaganda are poor [substitutes for]³ armed force or willing support of people.³

¹ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'extended powers'.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent is printed in square brackets.

³ The Financial Adviser later elaborated the theme of this telegram in a lengthy undated memorandum received in the Foreign Office on Nov. 22. This memorandum is not printed.

No. 480

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 339 Telegraphic [204318/2592/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 23, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram No. 338 (of June 4th).¹

We see no objection in principle to the despatch of detachment of South Persia Rifles from Kerman to Tabriz line as proposed by Persian Government.

We consider however that British and Indian personnel should be regarded solely as instructors, except in assisting Persia to maintain order among her own subjects. They should on no account accompany force in operations against an external enemy, or themselves participate therein.

It is for the Persian Government to decide in consultation with you and our Military Advisers whether the force is to be sent to Azerbaijan.

We hope to reply shortly as to question of cost.

¹ Not printed.

No. 481

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 342 Telegraphic [204984/150/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 23, 1920, 9 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 392, 393, 394 of 18th June,¹ regarding general situation in Persia are being carefully considered in the light of the helpful information and views which they contain.

You will have seen from my telegram No. 330 of 19th June that question of finance is not being lost sight of,² and that we are anxious to help within reasonable limits. You may inform Persian Prime Minister accordingly.

With regard to view expressed in your telegram No. 387 that Prime Minister has served his purpose,³ it is, I think, incontestable that he is in a better position to safeguard agreement than anyone else.

We do not know of anyone capable of taking his place, but shall be glad to hear what you have in mind. I have grave misgivings as to bringing in Mushir-ed-Dowleh, as suggested in your telegram No. 405.⁴ He is a weak character and inspires no confidence.

While whole situation is in such a kaleidoscopic state it is difficult to deal *seriatim* with the minor points raised in your telegrams. On general grounds it still seems advisable to accord all possible support to Vossugh-ed-Dowleh unless and until it becomes apparent that even our help cannot save him.

(Confidential)

I am not convinced at present of the sincerity of the Shah, an impression which your last conversation with him tends to confirm. Should he prove obstinate, I agree that it would be desirable to hold severe language to him, pointing out that his subsidy is purely conditional on his active support of Vossugh-ed-Dowleh, failing which it will automatically cease.⁵

¹ Nos. 468, 470, and 469 respectively.

² No. 472.

³ No. 466.

⁴ Of June 21, not printed.

⁵ In his telegram No. 344 of June 24 Lord Curzon instructed Mr. Norman to defer all action on the foregoing telegram 'pending receipt of further instructions after I have seen Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs . . . whom I shall see to-morrow morning'. Cf. No. 482 below, n. 2.

No. 482

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 343 Telegraphic [204984/150/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June 23, 1920, 9 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 403 and 409 of 21st and 22nd June.¹

Question of Prime Minister's full powers appears to loom unduly large.

¹ Not printed. In his No. 403 Mr. Norman reported that the Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs had told him that the Prime Minister's 'personal inclination was to resign, but that he thought it his duty to remain in view of gravity of situation if only he could secure from Shah full powers which he had demanded'. In his No. 409 he reported a visit from the Grand Master of the Ceremonies who had said that the Shah was 'anxious for reply which I had promised him regarding advisability of granting full powers to Prime Minister'.

It is evident that he is desirous, so long as he remains in power, of working with us. In this case it is surely incredible that he would adopt repressive measures against your advice.

With present Bolshevik menace, it may become imperative to take some steps against disruptive and disorderly elements, but so long as you are consulted and discretion is shown, it is difficult to see why these should be attended with disaster. On this assumption we can support Prime Minister in this matter.²

² In his telegram No. 345 of June 24 Lord Curzon said that his telegrams Nos. 342 and 343 (i.e. Nos. 481 and 482 above) 'should have been combined in one telegram namely 342' and that his No. 344 (see No. 481, n. 5) 'was meant to postpone action on the whole telegram'.

No. 483

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 24, 12.15 p.m.)

No. 415 Telegraphic [205709/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 23, 1920¹

My telegram No. 414.²

I began my conversation with Shah this afternoon by saying that I had learnt from Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs that His Majesty had arranged his difficulties with Prime Minister and promised His Highness the full powers which he demanded.

His Majesty replied that there was not a word of truth in this and proceeded once more to state his grievance against Prime Minister whom, he asserted, he had tried to support³ ever since his return to Persia but who in return had continually attacked him. Only lately for instance His Highness had circulated an untrue story to the effect that His Majesty had demanded as a condition of grant of full powers a sum of (? three hundred) thousand Tomans and His Highness proclaimed to everybody that whenever he tried to talk business with Shah His Majesty reverted to question of money.

If I insisted on his complying with Prime Minister's conditions he was willing to do so for my sake but he warned me that he disliked and distrusted him so extremely that he would never be able to work with him sincerely.

It was imperative to find an immediate solution to question at issue because Prime Minister was using delay occurring to organise in his own favour an agitation which (? represented) feeling of only an insignificant, if noisy, minority of people.

Shah spoke without concealment (? and) feels very strongly on the subject, . . .⁴ as he always does, but it was clearer than ever (? necessary)⁴ as I have

¹ The hour of despatch is not recorded.

² Of June 23, not printed.

³ The text as sent read: 'had loyally supported'.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. In the text as sent this sentence read: 'The Shah spoke without heat, as he always does, but it was clearer than ever that he feels very strongly on the subject and that it would be impossible, as I have for some time realised, to effect a real or permanent reconciliation between them.'

for some time realised, to effect a real or permanent reconciliation between them. If a hollow peace were patched up now a new crisis would occur in a week and country would suffer even more than it is suffering at present.

I said that I was still ignorant of views of His Majesty's Government but that in view of urgency of matter which I fully realised I felt bound to take responsibility of acting without instructions and could only hope that my action might later be approved by Your Lordship.

In the circumstances it was clearly useless to counsel His Majesty to continue to work with a statesman whom he had admitted that he detested and with whom he found it impossible to collaborate sincerely and I could not undertake to give him any such advice.

It only remained for him to accept Prime Minister's (? resignation).

I said I proposed to see His Highness to-morrow morning and tell him what had passed and I promised to let His Majesty know at once result of my interview.

Sent to India, Bagdad, Norperforce.

No. 484

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 24, 10.15 a.m.)

No. 416 Telegraphic [205664/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 23, 1920, 9 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Shah said that he wanted to discuss with me question of a successor to present Prime Minister.

It was in the first place essential that he should be a man who would loyally carry out Anglo-Persian agreement (? which was) corner-stone of his own policy.

I of course agreed but said that, speaking for myself, I regarded internal policy of present Prime Minister as a mistake and as cause of present universal discontent and rebellions which had broken out in the three revolting provinces of the North, and of danger which I believed threatened his Highness' own life and perhaps even that of His Majesty himself. I thought therefore that his successor should be a man who while willing to continue his foreign policy should adopt a different one at home. He must be willing to work with Nationalists and to gain popular support. He should at once also summon Parliament, and get agreement passed. My first choice, as a man who fulfilled these requirements, would be Mushir-ed-Dowleh though I could not guarantee that he would accept because I had purposely refrained from any communication with him or any opposition² for fear of laying myself open to suspicion of intriguing against Government.

I said that I proposed to consult Prime Minister himself on the subject.

Shah assured me that he agreed entirely with every word I had said.

I added that I considered it necessary in common honesty not to supersede

¹ No. 483.

² The text as sent read: 'or any of the opposition'.

present Minister for Foreign Affairs during his absence from the country. New Prime Minister ought therefore to undertake to retain Prince in office if His Highness wished it and so long as he acted loyally towards Government (? at least) till he had returned to Persia and had an opportunity of making some arrangement satisfactory to both parties.

Shah again agreed.

His Majesty then said that, as soon as he had received and accepted Prime Minister's resignation he should give instructions to Chief of Police to take special measures for maintenance of order in the town in case Prime Minister's supporters should try to create disturbances. He did not however think that they would do so when once His Highness had resigned. Danger period was rather present time of suspense, to which it was, for that reason, so important to put an end.

He should next send for Mushir-ed-Dowleh and after explaining situation to him and asking him to form Government recommend him to see me at once.

I would again remind your Lordship that I must be in a position to assure new Prime Minister, whoever he may be, of financial as well as moral support of His Majesty's Government without which, neither will any statesman undertake to form Government, nor could any Government if formed retain office for a week.

Sent to India, copy to Bagdad, Norperforce.

No. 485

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 27, 6.30 p.m.)

No. 417 Telegraphic [206097/150/34]

TEHRAN, June 25, 1920, 9.45 a.m.

Towards the end of our conversation yesterday¹ the Shah expressed hope that if present Government were succeeded by one equally acceptable to His Majesty's Government, which must be (? the case) because he himself would approve of no other, monthly subsidy of 150,000² tomans which he now received would be continued.

I asked His Majesty whether payment was conditional on his support of present Government in particular or on that of any Government agreeable to His Majesty's Government.

He replied that the latter was the case but I am now informed that this is untrue.

Nevertheless I recommend subsidy should be continued so long as Shah's attitude is satisfactory. He is now thoroughly well disposed towards us and determined to work with us in his own rather odd way. Best method of keeping him in this frame of mind is to give him, (? or the Prime Minister)³

¹ This telegram was drafted on June 24. See Nos. 483 and 484.

² This figure should be '15,000'; cf. No. 464 above and Vol. IV, No. 715, n. 1.

³ The text as sent read: 'or obtain for him'.

for him, as much money as we can for that is what he loves most in the world.

(? So long) as he (? remain)s on throne his co-operation is essential to success of our policy and if we thwart him in the matter of money we shall earn his undying resentment and though of course, he knows that he cannot really stand against us if it comes to a trial of strength (? he will cease to) help us and have secret (? recourse) to all sorts of devices to make our task more difficult.

Sent to India, Bagdad and North Persia Force.

No. 486

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 25, 10 p.m.)

No. 422 Telegraphic [205937/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 25, 1920, 1 p.m.

My telegram No. 419.¹

Shah yesterday accepted in writing resignation of Vossugh-ed-Dowleh, and sent for Mushir-ed-Dowleh this morning.

Sent to Bagdad and Norperforce.

¹ Of June 24, not printed.

No. 487

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 347 Telegraphic [205664/150/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 25, 1920, 2 p.m.

My telegram No. 344 of 24th June.¹

This morning I saw Prince Firuz, whose information confirmed our impression, derived from your telegram No. 416 of 23rd June,² that Vossugh-ed-Dowleh has already resigned. In these circumstances, it is useless for us to pursue the policy of support for that Minister which was suggested in my telegram No. 342,³ and we must make the best of new situation.

Firuz Mirza thinks it extremely unlikely that Mushir-ed-Dowleh will accept office or have requisite courage and authority to face Medjliss and carry through policy of Anglo-Persian Agreement in spite of fact that he was privy to and approved it. On other hand, Prince Firuz will himself, whether here or in Tehran, support Mushir-ed-Dowleh or any other Persian Minister who is loyal to agreement, and he is grateful for your efforts on his behalf; but he thinks it all-important that it should be made clear both to Shah and to new Minister that only on that condition can we continue our support, and that if there is to be any hesitation or defection on the part of new Persian Government, Persia must then make her own choice and turn

¹ See No. 481, n. 5.

² No. 484.

³ No. 481.

elsewhere for assistance. This is general line that you should adopt, although you must be careful not to commit us to any financial engagement, either to Shah or to any Minister, until you have fully informed us of situation and have received my authority.

Repeated to India.

No. 488

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 26, 9.15 a.m.)

No. 424 Telegraphic [205988/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 25, 1920, 3.30 p.m.

I think it my duty to warn Your Lordship that as stated in my telegram No. 392¹ any statesman who may undertake task of forming new Government is nearly sure to ask for introduction into Anglo-Persian agreement of certain small changes notably of a clause making that instrument terminable on a given date.

This is because everybody believes that absence of such a clause will gravely prejudice chances of agreement in Parliament.

I see no objection to insertion of an article providing that after say twenty years the two Governments shall consider whether renewal of agreement is desirable.

I draw attention to this point now in order that His Majesty's Government may have time to consider it before it is actually raised and to decide whether they will accept such a clause. Otherwise formation of a new Government may be delayed with results very dangerous to this country.

Sent to India, Bagdad, Norperforce.

¹ No. 468; but the reference should probably be to Tehran telegram No. 387, i.e. No. 466.

No. 489

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 28, 3 p.m.)

No. 418 Telegraphic [206405/202/34]

TEHRAN, June 25, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 327¹ and my telegram No. 411.²

I told the Shah yesterday³ that His Majesty's Government had accepted his proposals for dealing with Cossack Division and that British share of subsidy paid for its maintenance would at once be discontinued.

His Majesty expressed great satisfaction at first piece of information, but as regards second, begged me to urge His Majesty's Government to pay subsidy for this month (which fell due yesterday). If this were not done and men of division suddenly found themselves deprived of all means of support

¹ No. 471.

² Of June 22, not printed.

³ i.e. June 23; this telegram was drafted on June 24.

disturbance may be the result, not only at Tehran but also, which would be more serious, at Tabriz (where they might join Democrats and thus hasten the separation of Azerbaijan from rest of Persia) and elsewhere in provinces. It would be a grave misfortune to present Government to be confronted with troubles of this kind at very beginning of term of office.

I said that so far as Tabriz was concerned, I understood His Majesty to share my opinion that disturbance of state of Azerbaijan was one of discontent with present Government and might be expected to disappear with advent of another.

Shah replied that I was right about cause of situation, but wrong in thinking it would at once improve though it doubtless would do in time. Reason was that, while honest men had started movement, schemers had now obtained control of it, and as it was to the interest of these to keep movement alive, they could not be so easily pacified.

I told His Majesty that in any case I felt sure that His Majesty's Government would never consent to spend another penny on division.

Head of British Military Commission whom I have consulted on this subject considers danger not so great as Shah supposes.

The 60,000 tomans which Persian Government contribute monthly to support of division would suffice to pay a good many of the men for some time yet while there was room for many more in newly formed central brigade in which it was hoped to induce them to enlist.

There was however a possibility of disturbance.

I suggested that something might be done to convince men that on reduction they could obtain good pay and conditions of service elsewhere and to counter-act mischievous activity of Russian officers, who were telling them they would be left to starve.

General said that he would see what could be done in the way of starting a counter-propaganda in division.

Sent to India. Copy to Norperforce and Bagdad.

No. 490

Memorandum on the Persian Question by Mr. Ovey¹

[206831/150/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 25, 1920

In August 1919 Lord Curzon prepared a memorandum (printed for the War Cabinet) submitting a résumé of the transactions leading to the conclusion of the Anglo-Persian Agreement.² 10 months have now passed since that date and it may not be without interest to summarise briefly the present position in Persia for the information of those who have not time to digest the large number of telegrams from Tehran.

The Anglo-Persian Agreement stil[l] remains the corner stone of the policy

¹ A member of the Northern Department of the Foreign Office.

² See Vol. IV, No. 710.

of His Majesty's Government. In the first instance it would therefore be well to note what progress has been made in the reconstruction of a strong and independent Persia on the lines of that Agreement. At first sight the progress may seem disappointing. The chaos resulting—particularly in the Near and Middle East—from the conclusion of the past war has not produced a very favourable atmosphere for the initiation of reforms. To these disturbing factors must be added the unchangeability of the East. All said and done however the progress made by Persia is relatively no less than that in the newly emerged states of Central Europe.

The Financial Adviser has been at work for some weeks. The Anglo-Persian Military Commission has presented its report.³ An option has been given to a British group to construct a railway from the Mesopotamian frontier to Teheran and the survey is now being made.⁴ The Loan of £2,000,000 has [*sic*] in spite of many attacks on its integrity for purposes not contemplated in the Agreement, still remains practically unexpended and every endeavour is being made by Mr. Armitage Smith to reserve it for the purposes for which it was granted.

Reforms have not it is true yet been put in execution and the financial condition of the country is still unstable, current expenses exceeding current revenues. Bribery, corruption and misgovernment are still universal. Added to all this—what may be called normal state of affairs—Persia has had to suffer from a foreign invasion on the part of the Bolsheviks. In spite of promises the Bolshevik forces still remain at Enzeli, where, while the Russian element may not actually be engaged in hostilities they have by means of active propaganda set up a local force under a notorious bandit Chief Kutchik Khan, whose unaided activities had been practically checked, and a so-called Soviet Government of the town of Resht.⁵

Persia has appealed to the League of Nations, whose advice was to await the result of direct negotiations with the Moscow Government.⁶ The position in Azerbaijan is complicated and dangerous and the Persian Government are arranging to send the Persian Gendarmes from the South if not to restore order at least to hold matters in check in this district. The British officers with the force are prohibited from assisting in any military operations against an external enemy.

In this parlous state Persia naturally turned to England for active help. The Agreement does not specify any measure of active assistance in so many words and it is to the spirit rather than the letter that the Persian Government appeal. Hitherto no such active assistance has been forthcoming except that a force of some 600 men from Mesopotamia is on its way to Kazvin to reinforce our troops there. In the Near East the British forces formerly under General Malleson are in the process of being withdrawn. The British troops from Enzeli were withdrawn to Kazvin. Apart from military assistance the Persians have asked for arms, ammunitions and stores available in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Subject to a settlement of the details

³ See No. 403.

⁴ See No. 390, n. 2.

⁵ See No. 457.

⁶ See *L/N. O.J.*, No. 5, July–Aug. 1920, pp. 217–18; see also Nos. 438, 441, and 452 above.

of price the despatch of these stores has been practically agreed upon. The new army, contemplated in the report of the Anglo-Persian Military Commission, is of course still non-existent except on paper. The reliable forces at the disposal of the Persian Government are an almost negligible quantity. The former Russian Cossacks—a Persian force under Russian officers—has [*sic*] had a brush with the rebels in the North. As His Majesty's Government are not prepared to continue to subsidize this force, whose reliability is open to grave doubt, they have now refrained from active hostilities.

In the absence therefore of some definite cessation of hostilities and what is perhaps equally important propaganda by the Bolsheviks the position is nearly desperate. It is to be presumed, however, that it is not consonant with the Soviet Government's present designs to continue hostilities. To hope that they will refrain from propaganda is equivalent to hoping that the leopard will change his spots. It would therefore appear that the primary essential interest of His Majesty's Government is to tide over the period of incubation of the Anglo-Persian Agreement reforms by enabling Persia to resist the attacks of the Bolshevik virus so forcibly injected into her veins.

The Shah has returned to his capital. The early part of this journey he shared with Mr. Norman, the new British Minister, who was thus afforded exceptional facilities for acquiring the favour of His Imperial Majesty. His Majesty's sincerity is not above suspicion and his desire for power and particularly for money are not qualities calculated to develop an enlightened patriotism at variance with the inherited traditions of his and preceding dynasties.

Hitherto it has been the policy of His Majesty's Government to support in power the present Prime Minister, Vossugh-ed-Dowleh, who for reasons not entirely disinterested but for that all the more effectually is a bounden supporter of the Anglo-Persian Agreement. The Shah unfortunately for personal reasons is opposed to His Prime Minister and has been endeavouring earnestly to cause him to be supplanted although as a matter of fact under an obligation not to do so.

Mr. Norman has now had the opportunity of discussing matters fully with the Shah, the Prime Minister, the present temporary incumbent of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, etc. etc., and has come to the conclusion that Vossugh-ed-Dowleh has acquired such unpopularity as to endanger the success of the Anglo-Persian Agreement and the security of Persia by continuing in office.⁷ Vossugh-ed-Dowleh had himself expressed his inability to retain office and his desire to retire. This move may or may not have been a mere *ballon d'essai* to see which way the wind was blowing. Perhaps to his surprise his offer has been taken seriously and the names of possible successors have been mooted, the most talked of being Mushir-ed-Dowleh. His Majesty's Government have little confidence in the ability of this statesman whose character is weak and vacillating. They were therefore of opinion that His Majesty's Minister should be instructed to continue to support Vossugh-ed-Dowleh. Events however have moved so fast that instructions

⁷ See No. 466.

had to be sent to Mr. Norman to suspend any action on the instructions already issued to him to that effect. Whoever succeeds Vossugh-ed-Dowleh must be a single-minded supporter of the Anglo-Persian Agreement on which condition alone it is possible to continue to grant to Persia the financial assistance which Persia requires to 'carry on'.

On paper Mr. Norman's views—a more popular Minister with Nationalist connections and the assembly of the Mejliss in Parliament—are unexceptionable. In practice it must be remembered that honest statesmen in Persia are practically non-existent [and] that a genuine election of a representative Mejliss is an impossibility. The country is not ripe for pure parliamentary Government nor can it be supposed that the Shah for one moment would wish for anything but a packed assembly. The problem, in its naked form, therefore resolves itself into the question of in what direction Great Britain is to exercise her preponderating influence in the formation of a new Government. Unless we dissociate ourselves entirely from the fortunes of Persia we must assist her in the formation of a workable Government. It may appear undesirable in these days of democracy to suggest any form of absolutism during the period of transition, but a Persia left to itself can only fall under one of two absolutisms—that of the past or that inaugurated by the Bolsheviks in Russia. It would be better it should fall under a temporary executive absolutism tempered by the advice of impartial English advisers.

The corruption of the hereditary methods of Government are such that only years of tuition and guidance can effect any improvement. The reforms suggested by the Anglo-Persian Agreement are impossible without our advice, our advice is useless without an executive power capable of causing the medicine to be swallowed. Some form of Government with a responsible and practically autocratic Prime Minister, appointed by our advice is essential until some degree of honesty has been inculcated into official life and some degree of financial stability acquired, some unified armed force organised and the people trained to realise that Great Britain's financial assistance and advice has resulted in the improvement of their condition. That a Mejliss should be summoned is obvious. That it will be truly representative is impossible. To abstain from influencing its composition would be suicidal and merely give a free hand to the opposition to the Anglo-Persian Agreement who would consider such abstention a sign of weakness.

His Majesty's Government can only therefore, it is submitted, instruct His Majesty's Minister to support a strong and friendly Prime Minister, endeavour locally to found a system of counter propaganda to Bolshevism, advance Persia generously her actual requirements in money under proper safeguards and give the Agreement a chance of proving its value in the internal reforms of the country.

The present Prime Minister signed the Anglo-Persian Agreement. His fall will it is feared almost certainly be considered a victory for the opponents of that Agreement whatever promises his successor may give. The Shah will feel he has gained his point in ousting a personal enemy who among other crimes failed to supply the necessary funds to satisfy the Imperial extravagance.

Events have however rendered Vossugh-ed-Dowleh's fall almost a *fait accompli*.

It is to be feared unless the Imperial character has been grossly misjudged that the new Prime Minister appointed in deference to the Shah's wishes will be but a luke-warm supporter of any portion of the Anglo-Persian Agreement which does not directly or indirectly tend to fill the Imperial coffers.

ESMOND OVEY

No. 491

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 26, 10.30 p.m.)

No. 427 Telegraphic [206098/150/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 26, 1920, 12.30 p.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 342¹ and 345.²

I regret to have been obliged to act without instructions in the matter of change of Government here and even to have had the appearance, if I have had it, of trying to force the hand of His Majesty's Government but I had no choice. Indeed I should have done better to act (? a week) earlier for situation in revolting provinces of the North has become worse within the last few days and there is even a rumour, so far unconfirmed but by no means unlikely to be true, that Azerbaijan has declared itself a republic independent of Persia.

It was universal opinion amongst disinterested people here, both Persians and Europeans, that continuance in power of late Cabinet constituted a grave danger. Vossuk-ed-Dowleh himself recognised this, and though he may at moments have had revulsions of feeling, at last no influence could have induced him to retain office.

On the other hand it would have been equally dangerous to allow time to elapse before trying to form a new Government so that immediate action had to be taken.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh is in the view of great majority of educated people by far the best man available for the task. He is admittedly lacking in courage and energy as is every existing Persian statesman except Vossuk-ed-Dowleh himself, but, unlike the latter and most of the others, he has a reputation for honesty and is universally respected.

His Government, if he succeeds in forming one, will not be ideal but will be the best that can be found.

We must not expect them to sing aloud praises of Anglo-Persian agreement. That instrument has never really been popular because it was concluded secretly by a Statesman even then deeply distrusted, who persistently postponed submitting it to Parliament and never explained it to the public and its unpopularity has grown with that of its Persian signatory. To-day few

¹ No. 481.

² See No. 482, n. 2.

Persians however friendly to Great Britain and however firmly convinced, as most intelligent Persians are, that the only chance of saving their country lies in cooperation with us, would dare publicly to express approval of it.

If then new Government are to succeed in gaining confidence of people they must be reticent on the subject at least till they have had time to make it better understood.

Chief danger to them at first is that they should be considered to be accomplices of man who is held to have sold his country to Great Britain. They will thus try to preserve an outward show of independence and in doing so perhaps appear at times less deferential than we may like.

Under their auspices however agreement stands a good chance of acceptance by Parliament whereas policy which it embodies was doomed to failure in the end while identified with late Government who would never have dared even to submit it to that Assembly even if they had ever had intention or courage to assemble it.

These remarks apply equally to a Government formed by any other Statesman should Mushir-ed-Dowleh refuse to undertake the task or fail to accomplish it.

Sent to India, Bagdad, and Norperforce.

No. 492

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 27, 11.40 a.m.)

No. 428 Telegraphic [206099/150/34]

Most urgent

TEHRAN, June 26, 1920, 12.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 422 and my immediately preceding telegram.¹

I called on Mushir-ed-Dowleh last night at his request. He told me that he had asked Shah to allow him time to reflect and to consult me before deciding whether he would take office.

In the course of a conversation of two and a half hours we discussed the following points:—

1. Programme of Cabinet.

Both were agreed on necessity of advising the Shah to call meeting of notables as proposed in your telegram No. 311² and of issuing some sort of proclamation by His Majesty or communication from Government and of including in latter a promise that Parliament will be summoned. Mushir-ed-Dowleh insisted that new election must first be held and I agreed. It is known that the last took place under pressure and members chosen are now quite discredited and are moreover, after waiting for months at Tehran with nothing to do and exposed to bad influences, as likely as not to vote wrong way.

I suggested that in other respects communication should be on lines of that proposed in your telegram No. 311 and asked that it might contain a statement that agreement formed basis of Government's policy. To this Mushir-

¹ Nos. 486 and 491.

² No. 455.

ed-Dowleh demurred (see my immediately preceding telegram) and said that on the contrary it would be more prudent to say agreement was suspended till approved by Parliament.

To this I objected in my turn saying I could not admit an expression which appeared to throw doubt on validity of an instrument signed by duly accredited representatives of both Governments and almost to encourage Parliament to reject it. I would sanction statement that agreement would be submitted for approval of Parliament.

His Highness said that Vossuk-ed-Dowleh had said as much, and that use of phrase would therefore fail to inspire confidence. He promised however to seek for formula acceptable to us both and to put in cordial reference to Great Britain.

He also undertook to do what he could by quiet propaganda to convert opinion to our side, and this legation will do the same.

His Highness then said that in any case operation of agreement must be in fact suspended until Parliament met.

I pointed out that this would involve interruption for at least three months of excellent work of financial and military commissions, who were anticipating Parliamentary approval just at the moment when it was most essential to expedite financial reforms and military reorganisation.

His Highness admitted this but said that he could not declare necessity for submitting agreement to Parliament and at the same time allow it to come into force independently of that body's approval.

Finally I persuaded him to let Financial Commission proceed with their recommendations and military with their studies.

He said however he would pass no further contracts with advisers until agreement had been adopted by Parliament, and to this I raised no objection as I felt it to be useless.

He told me that till (? Parliament) (? assented)³ Cabinet would be assisted by a small Council.

He said also that he should try to conciliate revolting provinces before attempting to reduce them to submission by force and would telegraph these at once.

2. I told Mushir-ed-Dowleh, by authority conveyed to me by your telegram No. 330,⁴ to use part of loan for defence of the country.

I am most grateful for this authority, to use of which Financial Adviser has agreed and of which advantage will be certainly taken, but I should warn His Majesty's Government that:

(a) A considerable sum may have to be used in this way and;

(b) Even full £2,000,000 will not be sufficient to finance a really complete scheme of reform but will have to be supplemented at some time in future.

I told Mushir-ed-Dowleh that I was authorised to pay 266,000 tomans as subsidy for present month,⁵ but felt bound to withhold same till Financial

³ The text as sent read: 'met'.

⁴ No. 472.

⁵ Cf. No. 473, n. 3. The reason for the discrepancy in these figures has not been traced in F.O. archives.

Adviser's recommendations were put into force (see my telegram No. 426).⁶

His Highness said that unless a continuance of full subsidy for some months was guaranteed he could not take office and that nobody else could either.

I said that I was trying to arrange this.

He will see Financial Adviser to-morrow.

3. Composition of Cabinet.

It would include his Highness' brother Motamin-ul-Mulk, who is most suitable. There must be also, he says, a representative of Bakhtiari, and he proposed Samsam[-es-]Sultane whom I refused to accept as he has nothing to recommend him. He then suggested Amir-i-Mufakham to which I raised no objection as he appears to be (? harmless) if useless, but I do not see why Bakhtiari, who has held⁷ so many important posts already, should be admitted at all.

I asked him to retain Nosrat-ed-Dowleh on conditions which I have mentioned in previous telegrams⁸ and referred to desire of Financial Adviser to keep present Minister of Finance, he promised to consider these two requests. He then said that he wished to include two prominent Nationalists, Mustaufi-el-Mamalek on account of his great influence, and confidence reposed in him by people, and Mukhber-es-Sultaneh on account of his authority in Azerbaijan.

He felt sure they would work loyally with him. I said that he knew opinion held by His Majesty's Government of these people on account of their black record during war, which was such that I could not possibly accept them without explicit authority from you. As a matter of fact they are just the people whom we want (see my telegram No. 419),⁹ for they can help more than anybody to make our policy popular and I know they are anxious to be friendly. Moreover none but a reactionary Government, which would ruin our Cause, can be formed without them or others like them.

4. Cossack Division.

He said that on principle he was and had always been in favour of immediate dismissal of Russian officers, but that in present critical situation he shared view of the Shah regarding course to be pursued. I failed to move him from this opinion, though I shook him. He said the Shah hoped that His Majesty's Government would continue their subsidy to division for three months more, but I said that there was no chance of their doing so even for the one month for which His Majesty had asked me to arrange (see my telegram No. 418).¹⁰

5. He said that the Shah wanted to send a Persian mission to Moscow to try to get Bolsheviks removed from Persia and their propaganda stopped, and he asked whether His Majesty's Government would approve of this. I said I thought not. His Majesty's Government were indeed, I believed, themselves negotiating with Soviet Government, but only on commercial matters. A Persian mission would in any case accomplish nothing, because, as Soviet Government had already declared that Bolsheviks in Persia were acting

⁶ Of June 26, not printed.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'who hold'.

⁸ See, e.g., No. 484.

⁹ Of June 24, not printed.

¹⁰ No. 489.

without authority, they would say they could not control those people. Moreover even if they promised to cease propaganda, they would break their word.

6. I asked His Highness whether he had heard of a demand for introduction of changes in agreement but he appeared to have no information about this.

7. Finally his Highness asked me whether he was to postpone his decision until I had received your instructions regarding attitude which I am to adopt on points dealt with under (1), (2) and (3) above, or whether he was to take office at once. In latter case what should he do if your replies were unfavourable?

I replied that I considered delay so dangerous that I advised him to form his Government at once, then if he was (? dissatisfied with) (? existing)¹¹ conditions he would have to resign. That would be regrettable, but I saw no alternative.

Final success or failure of our policy in Persia may depend on nature of your reply.

His Highness is to see Shah again tomorrow morning.

I beg for very early instructions.

Sent to India. Copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

¹¹ The text as sent read: 'dissatisfied with your'.

No. 493

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 28, 9 a.m.)

No. 433 Telegraphic [206151/150/34]

Clear the line. Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 27, 1920, 9 p.m.

My telegram No. 430.¹

Mushir-ed-Dowleh told me this afternoon that further reflection and conversations which he had had with many people representing various classes had deepened his conviction that in order to gain confidence of people in sincerity of new Government it would be necessary to say something in proposed proclamation about Anglo-Persian Agreement being in abeyance pending its consideration by Parliament. He therefore hoped that I would consent to withdraw my objection to that phrase.²

I said that I could not approve of any expression which threw doubt on validity of agreement but finally suggested a form of words which his Highness accepted to the effect that execution of agreement was in abeyance pending that event.

This phrase which in fact expressed no more than the truth appears to solve difficulty.

His Highness returned with great insistence to question of payment for 2 or 3 months more of British share of monthly subsidy for Cossack division.

¹ Of June 26, not printed.

² See No. 492, section 1.

He emphasised great danger to new Government of presence in (? capital) and still more at Tabriz of a body of discontented men without employment or money. He feared still more that when it became known that payment had been discontinued division incited by its Russian officers would raise flag of revolution.

There was also possibility that division might be required for use against Janjalis [Jangalis].

He begged me therefore very earnestly once more to represent his request to His Majesty's Government and I promised to do so.

There is no doubt much force in what he says. Persian Government are certainly not strong enough at present to suppress a rising of division without help of British troops. Their help could be given but their use in capital and (*sic*) (? at)³ inauguration of new era, from which all hope so much, by scenes of disorder and bloodshed would greatly injure position of Government while effect of a rising of Cossacks at Tabriz might if they joined democrats lead to final severance of Azerbaijan from Persia.

After a month or two, when a popular Government has appeased general discontent as I believe it will have, it may be hoped that question will be settled satisfactorily.

In any case if it is found impossible to comply with his Highness' request, neither he nor any of his associates will undertake to form a Government and I doubt whether any statesmen of another political complexion will do so either.

Sent to India. Copy by post to Bagdad and Norperforce.

³ The text as sent read: 'in the capital and the inauguration'.

No. 494

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 29, 11 p.m.)

No. 435 Telegraphic [206642/150/34]

TEHRAN, June 28, 1920, 11.40 a.m.

I observed to Mushir-ed-Dowleh this afternoon¹ that delay in forming a new Government, though inevitable, was necessarily dangerous, and begged him at once to ask those persons whom he desired to include in his Cabinet to give him an undertaking to join it provided that replies of His Majesty's Government regarding conditions that had been laid down should prove satisfactory. In that case he would thus be able to take office at once and at least two or three precious days would be saved. He promised to do this.

He feels absolutely confident that both Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek and Mukhbar-es-Sum² are wholeheartedly with us and I have good reason to believe that he is right.

Sent to India, Bagdad and Norperforce.

¹ This telegram was drafted on June 27.

² Altered in the Foreign Office to read 'Mukbar-es-Sultaneh', as in the text sent from Tehran.

No. 495

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received June 29, 9.15 a.m.)

No. 436 Telegraphic [206463/150/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, June 28, 1920, 11.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 347.¹

I told Mushir-ed-Dowleh this afternoon² of assurances which I was authorised to give on behalf of His Majesty's Government [to any Persian Government]³ which would loyally support agreement and try to get it accepted by (? Parliament).

His Highness was grateful for it, but naturally disappointed at omission of any promise of financial support which I told him that I had been expressly instructed to withhold.

I also informed him of assurance given to your Lordship by Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs at which he expressed satisfaction saying that he was strongly disposed to retain the latter in his present post.

He feels I think that before committing himself definitely he must consult his Colleagues on the subject.

Sent to India, Bagdad and Norperforce.

¹ No. 487.

² This telegram was drafted on June 27.

³ These four words were in the text as sent from Tehran but only in a printed copy of the telegram in the Foreign Office.

No. 496

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 1, 12.35 p.m.)

No. 446 Telegraphic [C 82/82/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, June 30, 1920, 10 a.m.

My telegram No. 442.¹

Shah sent for me this afternoon.²

I found His Majesty in a very nervous state.

He said that in absence of a Government numbers of important questions were daily entered into which he had neither knowledge nor as a constitutional Sovereign authority to decide while Mushir-ed-Dowleh not yet being in office could not help him much. Consequently nothing was being done to settle them and anarchy reigned in the various Government departments.

News had been just received from Luristan that Lurs were attacking Burujird and reinforcements were urgently demanded. Jangalis were quietly sending small parties of men to complete³ undefended road from Mazanderan to capital with a view to eventual attack on latter, in which they were at the same time introducing rifles, a dozen or so at a time.

¹ Of June 29, not printed.

² This telegram was presumably drafted on June 29.

³ In the text as sent this word read: 'completely'.

In Gilan seeing themselves secure from interference, they were gathering for *coup d'état*.⁴ Rebels in Mazanderan were sending messages stating conditions on which they were willing to make their submission but nobody had authority to give effect to them. In the meantime the 1,300 gendarmes who were opposing them were useless for other purposes. (I have so far no confirmation of these reports but they are likely enough to be true.) None of these urgent matters said His Majesty could be dealt with. Finally Mushir-ed-Dowleh had said that if within next few days he had received no assurance of financial help he would be forced definitely to refuse office.

His Majesty said that he himself was blamed by everybody for delay in forming Government, true reason for which he could not publicly declare. He could not much longer face difficulties of his position and responsibility which had been thrust upon him. His throne and life would soon be in danger. If he retired from neighbourhood of Teheran to his palace at Pusht-i-Kuh⁵ as he has thought of doing anarchy would at once reign in capital.

If he stayed where he was and no answer came from London same thing would happen a few days later. He therefore again begged me to give on my own responsibility an assurance that financial help would be forthcoming.

I said that I could give no such undertaking but begged His Majesty not to flee without considering very carefully grave consequences which must follow.

He asked whether I thought delay was due as Mushir-ed-Dowleh himself feared to dissatisfaction with his choice of a Prime Minister. In that case he would at once select one agreeable to His Majesty's Government, but he warned me no one would attempt to form Government without assurances sought by Mushir-ed-Dowleh himself.

I restated what I believed to be causes of delay which I had often explained before and said that as a reply must soon arrive I earnestly counselled patience for a few days longer. I did not consider that His Majesty was as yet in any peril. Shah's natural timidity probably leads him to exaggerate actual danger of his own position but it is certainly very difficult and embarrassing while general situation at present rate will in a few days become hopeless.

In the meantime our own position, which had improved as result of news that Mushir-ed-Dowleh had been asked to form Government, is suffering from reports spread by our enemies that delay in his Highness's assumption of office is due to our insistence on outrageous conditions which he cannot conscientiously accept.

Sent to India.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'gathering courage'.

⁵ A note on the filed copy read: "This is some 15 miles N.E. of Tehran."

*Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)**No. 352 Telegraphic [C 108/82/34]**Very urgent*FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 1, 1920, 3.30 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 417 to 442 (of June 25th to 29th)¹ have been received with two or three exceptions. I cannot regard the entrance into power of Mushir-ed-Dowleh without considerable misgiving in view of the fact that the names of the individuals whom he proposes to include in his Cabinet appear to be of very mediocre capacity. This view taken in conjunction with his own character throws serious doubt upon likelihood of his passing the Agreement through the Mejliss, even if he promises to convoke it for that purpose.

As regards terms on which our support can be given there are certain payments which we cannot possibly entertain. We cannot continue to make monthly allowance to Shah which was expressly contingent upon retention of Vossugh-ed-Dowleh in power. Neither can we be responsible for any of expenses incurred by His Majesty in Europe. Further in view of the past history of the Cossack Division and the evident impossibility of reaching finality as regards the payments of monthly subsidy, I regret that I cannot advise His Majesty's Government any longer to continue this support.

The utmost for which I can obtain assent of His Majesty's Government is continuance of monthly subsidy of Tomans 350,000 for a period of four months, and that only on condition that the Mejliss is summoned and its consent to Agreement sought within that period. If the approval of Mejliss is given there may be case for reconsideration at a later date. On the other hand, if the Mejliss is either not convoked or withholds its consent, it will be useless to persevere in a policy which Persia herself clearly has not the conviction or the courage to sustain. There remains the unexpended portion of the two million loan. Assent has already been given to allocation of part of this sum to military requirements² and if Financial Adviser receives adequate support from new Persian Government and recommends this use, I will do my best to secure approval of His Majesty's Government.

The question of the exiles raised in your telegram No. 431³ does not appear so easy of solution as you imply. While some of the culprits may have been doubtful of the eventual issue of the war, action of Mukhber-es-Sultaneh was such as to inspire us with the most profound suspicion of his loyalty—and his appointment now could only aggravate the apprehensions that we already entertain.

The despatch of a Mission to Moscow in present circumstances would appear foredoomed to failure. Representations made by Firouz Mirza to

¹ See Nos. 485-6, 488-9, 491-5.

² See No. 472.

³ Of June 27, not printed. In this Mr. Norman had expressed his 'absolute' conviction that 'time has come when His Majesty's Government should agree to forget the past and allow all personal grievances to be set aside'.

M. Krassin and his telegrams to Tchicherin have hitherto had small success⁴ and there is no reason to suppose that a personal delegation would be less unsuccessful.

You are authorised to speak to Mushir-ed-Dowleh in general sense of this telegram. His Majesty's Government are far from desiring to abandon the general line of policy which they have consistently pursued towards Persia throughout the administration of Vossugh-ed-Dowleh. But if this régime is to be replaced by something entirely different they require some guarantees that reciprocal good faith and loyalty will be displayed by the incoming Persian Government.

⁴ See Nos. 445, 458, n. 8, and 465.

No. 498

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 353 Telegraphic [206083/150/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 1, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Please convey to His Highness Vosouk-ed-Dowleh a personal message of thanks and appreciation from me for the eminent services he has rendered to his country and to our joint interests from the date he took office as Prime Minister in August 1918 until his retirement after two years of strenuous labour.

I hope that his health will benefit by the rest he so much deserves and I feel sure that he will assist His Majesty's Legation whenever required with his valuable advice and guidance in matters concerning the interests of our two countries.

No. 499

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 5, 5.15 p.m.)

No. 453 Part 1 Telegraphic [C 456/82/34]

TEHRAN, *July 3, 1920, 8.50 a.m.*

I spoke to Mushir-ed-Dowleh this afternoon¹ in sense of your telegram No. 352.²

He did not know of monthly allowance paid to Shah and did not ask for its continuance, merely remarking that its cessation would annoy His Majesty.

He was equally unfamiliar with controversy which has been going on regarding His Majesty's demand for reimbursement of his travelling expenses, but after hearing my explanation of question, observed that so long as he was in power no public money would ever be devoted to this object.

I regret decision about allowance because it will remove one of chief

¹ This telegram was drafted on July 2.

² No. 497.

inducements which could be offered to Shah to cooperate loyally with Government in power and if Mushir assumes office I shall feel especially sorry because Cabinet which he will form will be able to render infinitely greater services both to ourselves and to Persia than with best intentions its predecessor could, and it would therefore be far better worth our while to secure His Majesty's support for it.

I also regret decision in a minor degree because it will make it much more difficult for me than would otherwise be the case to maintain my present cordial relations with Shah.

I propose however to gain time by saying nothing to His Majesty on either of above questions. When he raises them, as sooner or later he is sure to do, I shall point out to him, as I have been authorized by Financial Adviser to do, that it may be possible eventually to increase his civil list as a result of proposed financial reforms, and beg him to have patience till then.

2. For reasons which I hope to have made clear in previous telegrams³ Persian Government (are not) yet in a position to take steps against Russian officers of Cossack Division and it is (therefore) imperative (that) force should continue to be paid for a few months more from some source or other.

As therefore I anticipated an unfavourable reply from Your Lordship on this point I feel⁴ obliged to have an alternative plan ready in case such a reply was received and I have accordingly, with assent of Financial Adviser, who shares my views on this point, asked Imperial Bank of Persia to forego for two or three months whole (or) part of interest amounting to 100,000 Tomans a month paid by Persian Government on their floating debt⁵ so that division may be paid till Mushir can carry out his pledge to dismiss Russian officers. Bank has agreed to do this. I regret that this measure should be necessary.

I propose at the same time to arrange that monthly sum paid to Division should be reduced since it is known to be more than sufficient for needs of force. Mushir has assented to this arrangement and will speak to Shah on last point. With regard to His Highness' pledge above referred to I have perhaps (failed to) make sufficiently clear in previous telegrams that he wishes matter kept absolutely secret and does not intend to reveal it even to his own colleagues. I beg therefore that it may not be mentioned to Persian (Delegation).⁶

3. Before seeing (Mushir) (I asked) Financial Adviser whether continuation of subsidy for another four months would enable him to carry out his work. He said that it would if (a) proposals for financial reform already made were immediately put into execution and (b) he could negotiate a loan with Imperial Bank of Persia, Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and Persian Railway

³ See, e.g., Nos. 492 and 493.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'felt'.

⁵ In a minute dated July 6, Mr. G. P. Churchill, a member of the Central European and Persia Department, explained that a subsequent telegram, Tehran No. 461, 'makes it clear that this refers to the borrowings of January last from the Imperial Bank . . . which were to have been repaid in fourteen monthly instalments of Tomans 100,000 each'.

⁶ The text as sent read: 'Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs'.

Syndicate to cover any deficit which may arise when subsidy ceases to be paid. (Such a loan may of course prove unnecessary.)

Mushir-ed-Dowleh accepted these conditions. As regards (a) however, reforms will appear to have been initiated by Government and not by Financial Adviser.

His Highness readily gave assurance demanded by Your Lordship in return that his Government will summon Parliament and do their best to get Anglo-Persian Agreement accepted. This has indeed been basis of his policy from first and he is (hopeful) (of) success, only, seeing how unpopular agreement for reasons already explained has become, he prefers for present not to put it too prominently forward in public utterances of new Government. I assume in view of (decision) of His Majesty's Government to continue payment of subsidy, the sum of 266,000 Tomans (of which figure I have not yet received promised explanation) will be made up to 350,000 and that contemplated period of four months will begin with July.

Part 1 ends.

Repeated to India.

No. 500

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 8, 11.20 a.m.)

No. 453 Part 2 Telegraphic [C 791/82/34]

TEHRAN, July 3, 1920, 8.50 a.m.

4. Passage in Your Lordship's telegram regarding loan of £2,000,000 has reached me in what appears to be incomplete form.¹

Mushir-ed-Dowleh knows that part of it may be used for military needs and in view of imminent danger threatening country he may decide, if his colleagues consent, to abandon his strict view that Persia has no right to employ any part of sum for any purpose till agreement has been accepted by Parliament.

I have advised him to take this course.

5. Mushir-ed-Dowleh fully understands apprehension felt by His Majesty's Government at inclusion of certain persons especially Mukhbar-es-Sultaneh in new Government.

He begged me to explain that he was admitting the latter because it was necessary to do so in order to obtain support of nationalists. Mukhbar-es-Sultaneh however did not wish to stay at Teheran and after occupying post of Minister of Finance for at most a fortnight during which he would be strictly enjoined to co-operate loyally with Financial Adviser he would be sent to Azerbaijan where he has immense influence as Governor General which is what he especially desires.

Mushir-ed-Dowleh is confident that Mukhbar-es-Sultaneh and the other suspects will honestly work with us if only because they see that Persia's

¹ The reference was to No. 497, last sentence in para. 3. This passage was repeated to Tehran in Foreign Office telegram No. 360 of July 6.

sole hope lies in that direction. Moreover he would not tolerate amongst his colleagues the slightest disloyalty to Great Britain.

In respect of mere capacity new Government will be infinitely superior to last which, with the exception of Minister for Foreign Affairs, was composed entirely of nonentities mostly very corrupt who held their posts simply as creatures of Prime Minister.

6. Mushir-ed-Dowleh has no particular wish to send a mission to Moscow but said that there existed in country strong conviction that such a mission would succeed in inducing Soviet Government to promise to withdraw its troops and emissaries from Persian territory and cease propaganda there. We agreed however that no such promise was likely to be kept.

He will return to thus [*sic*] subje[c]t later.²

7. He received with pleasure friendly message at the end of your telegram and readily gave assurances, which indeed he has often before offered to me spontaneously. He asked however whether His Majesty's Government required anything more specific than declaration which he had made but I could not enlighten him on this point.

He will confer with his prospective colleagues this evening³ and make his report to the Shah tomorrow morning.

I think there is good hope that he will be in a position to announce his assumption of office tomorrow evening which would have an excellent effect on present very critical situation.

Sent to India. Copies to Baghdad, Norperforce and Financial Adviser.

² See No. 503 below.

³ i.e. July 2; see No. 499, n. 1.

No. 501

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 5, 3.30 p.m.)

No. 458 Telegraphic [C 458/458/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, July 4, 1920, 8 p.m.

I have lately received large number of most disquieting reports regarding Bolshevik activities of various kinds on both sides of frontier of Khorassan from which it appears probable that if British force at Meshed is withdrawn that province will quickly be overrun.

Quite apart from injury which loss of so important a province would inflict on Persia and danger to India experienced by presence of Bolshevik forces in that region effect on political situation here would be extremely bad and perhaps even fatal.

I have finally succeeded, in spite of evidence to the contrary which he believes to exist, in convincing Mushir-ed-Dowleh that His Majesty's Government are prepared to give him a fair trial and he has consented to take office very largely on that assumption. If these troops are now withdrawn his belief in my assurances will be severely shaken and he will fear the first step is being taken to abandon Persia to her fate at moment of her most pressing need. At worst he will then at once resign; in that case crisis from which

I hope country is at last recovering will recur in an even more acute and dangerous form and it will be difficult and perhaps even impossible to induce any other statesman to form Government. Consequences of such a situation as affecting British policy in Persia have already been explained.

At best position of new Government would be seriously shaken and their prestige gravely impaired at the very outset of their career while task of initiating reforms and getting Anglo-Persian Agreement accepted by Parliament would become much more difficult.

I trust therefore that it may be found possible to keep force in question where it is at least till new Cabinet is firmly established, agreement has been accepted and country is in a better position to defend itself unaided.

Sent to India, Meshed, Baghdad, Kasirn [Kazvin].

No. 502

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 8, 9.30 a.m.)

No. 468 Telegraphic [C 695/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, July 7, 1920, 12 noon

Recent reports show that¹ landings by parties of Bolsheviks at points of Caspian coast East of Enzeli and movements of Bolshevik parties on Teheran from direction of Mazanderan. This appears to show that Bolsheviks and their Persian supporters intend to avoid General Champain's force at Menjil and to advance on capital by routes east of Gilan. Result is great feeling of insecurity and almost panic in capital.

Gendarmes and Cossacks are being sent to Passes over Elburz covering Teheran from Mazanderan but fighting value of these is small and successful resistance by them cannot be relied on unless supported by British troops. Teheran in Bolshevik hands means not only ruin of our interests and policy in Persia but wholesale murder of Europeans and destruction [*sic*] of European property at Teheran. Would very urgently request that immediate instructions be sent to General Champain that his task is (a) to cover not only Kasvin but Teheran from a hostile invasion from north and (b) in the event of a Bolshevik invasion in greater strength than can be coped with to cover withdrawal of Persian Government and European community southwards. Co-operation of British troops in protection of capital would not only restore confidence but greatly increase British prestige which has suffered a severe blow owing to General Champain's retreat from Enzeli before Bolsheviks.

Addressed to General Officer Commanding, Baghdad 318 M repeated to Norperforce and Foreign Office No. 468.

¹ The word 'that' was not in the text as sent from Tehran.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 8, 4.30 p.m.)

No. 465 Telegraphic [C 830/56/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, July 7, 1920, 3.35 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Prime Minister also spoke this afternoon of possible means of counteracting Bolshevism other than purely military measures.

In first place he returned to question of despatch of a mission to Moscow (see my telegram No. 428, paragraph 5)² which, he repeated, was insistently demanded by public opinion. If it were sent Government would be able to show even in case of its failure that they had neglected no . . .³ by which country might possibly have been saved. I said that attitude of His Majesty's Government on this point (see your telegram No. 182),⁴ so far as I understood it, was not so much⁵ that they thought it predoomed to failure. I personally saw no harm in trying the plan, though I felt sure that, even if, as a result, promises were made, they would no more be kept than previous ones had been. I recommended however that in any case another mission should at once be sent to Soviet Government again demanding recall of Bolshevik troops from Persian territory and cessation of propaganda there. Prime Minister replied that he would do this at once.

He added that the mission would consist of present Persian Ambassador at Constantinople (about to be superseded) and Minister at Rome, both of whom know Russians and their language well.

He told me in confidence that he was also about to send secret mission to Holy Places in Mesopotamia with a view to inducing the religious authorities there to issue a *fatwa*⁶ condemning Bolshevism as contrary to Islam, a step which I myself had been intending to advise.

He said that Government would, as he had promised me, summon an assembly of notables Clergy, &c. to whom a stirring appeal would be made for union against common enemy. Anti-Bolshevik propaganda would be started in capital and local authorities would be instructed to take similar steps in provinces.

He further said that certain newspapers had been publishing series of articles which while ostensibly condemning Bolshevism really advocated it. There was no means of establishing a censorship and he therefore proposed, with my concurrence, to suppress all newspapers except an⁷ official organ till Parliament met, though he admitted that most of them were blameless in matter.

¹ Tehran telegram No. 464 of July 7 (not printed). Both this and Tehran telegram No. 465 were drafted on July 6.

² See No. 500, para. 6.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'measures'.

⁴ No. 407.

⁵ The text as sent from Tehran contained the following words after 'much': 'that they objected to the despatch of such a mission as'. These words were missing from the text as received in the Foreign Office.

⁶ i.e. a decree issued by Muslim religious authorities.

⁷ The text as sent read 'the' instead of 'an'.

I was pleased to notice a willingness to take strong measures so inconsistent with prevalent view of Prime Minister's character, but nevertheless deprecated step because I thought that it would make a bad impression as first act of a Government professed to be inaugurating an era of liberty. Moreover as soon as they were allowed to appear again all the papers would avenge themselves by attacking the Government. In the meantime absence of any press would deprive the authorities of a valuable instrument of propaganda. I therefore recommended, instead, issue of a proclamation warning press that any individual newspaper which advocated Bolshevism would be immediately suppressed.

The Prime Minister promised to take my advice.

The Capital will remain under martial law.

Repeated to India.

No. 504

Lord Hardinge¹ to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 365 Telegraphic [C 575/458/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 7, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 458 (of July 4th).²

The withdrawal of our forces in Khorassan is imminent in accordance with a decision of His Majesty's Government.

¹ Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Lord Curzon attended the Inter-Allied Conference at Spa, July 5-16, see Vol. VIII, Chap. VIII.

² No. 501.

No. 505

Lord Hardinge to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 366 Telegraphic [C 368/243/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 7, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram July 2nd.¹

Following for A[rmitage] Smith from McLintock.² Begins.

Negotiations were on point of being concluded for a final settlement on following basis.

1. Counter Claim to be abandoned.
2. Additional payment of £692,000 for royalty to 31st March 1919, of which £192,000 paid a few weeks ago.
3. Basis of future royalty 16% of nett profits the method of ascertainment of profits being carefully defined and profit on tankers to be excluded.

¹ This unnumbered private telegram from Mr. Armitage Smith to Mr. Oliphant is not printed.

² Mr. William McClintock of Messrs. Thomson, McClintock and Co., Chartered Accountants, who were acting on behalf of the Persian Government in their negotiations with the Anglo-Persian Oil Co.

4. Suggestion abandoned for royalty at flat rate per ton of oil or on a sliding scale per ton of oil. Ends.

We have explained to McLintock that in circumstances negotiations on behalf of Firouz cannot continue as Cabinet has fallen. McLintock is of opinion that provided he has new full power he can soon conclude negotiations on above lines to advantage of Persian Government to whom delay may be prejudicial.

No. 506

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 10, 11.50 a.m.)

No. 475 Telegraphic [C 982/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, July 9, 1920, 6.50 p.m.

My telegram No. 473.¹

I have now discussed with head of British Military Commission and (? Financial Adviser) aspects of proposed expedition to Mazanderan which respectively concerned them.

The former considers Cossacks alone should suffice to deal with the enemy in that province but that an advance by Norperforce troops from Kasvin towards Resht in accordance with suggestion made by Commander of Cossack Division would be of great assistance and would indeed have more important results than main operations. General Officer Commanding Norperforce could not however undertake this without permission from superior authority. I therefore propose to ask that he may receive discretionary . . .² matter.

I should add that in a message commenting on my telegram to General Officer Commanding Mesopotamia repeated to you as No. 468³ General Officer Commanding Norperforce expresses opinion that his troops would be more useful where they now are than in Mazanderan and this is also view . . .⁴ also from Colonel Starosselski expressed to me yesterday by Prime Minister.

General Dickson opposes for several reasons which appear to me valid a proposal made by Prime Minister (or again perhaps originally by Colonel Starosselski) to employ central brigade to help Cossacks.

As regards financial aspect it is clear that monthly subsidy even with addition of payment to Cossack division sanctioned by your telegram No. 363⁵ will not suffice for expenses of expedition while Persian Government still shrinks for reasons already given from using loan for the purpose.

¹ Of July 9, not printed.

² The text received was here uncertain. As sent from Tehran it read: 'discretion in the matter'.

³ No. 502.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. As sent it read: 'the view (probably emanating from Colonel Starosselski)'.

⁵ Of July 7. This had informed Mr. Norman that he might extend for a further period of three months the assurance that the lien of H.M.G. on the customs revenues of Kerman-shah, Seistan and the South would not absorb more than £40,000 monthly until the total advance from the Imperial Bank of Persia had been repaid in monthly instalments of 100,000 tomans each. Cf. No. 499, n. 5.

Financial Adviser accordingly suggests that amount of *necessary* expenses of expedition should be guaranteed to Persian Government and that money should be furnished either by (1) separate advance made by His Majesty's Government amount of which should, if necessary, be deducted from that of loan, formula employed being that this advance will be 'taken into account' in considering amount of any loan to be made under Anglo-Persian Agreement or (2) an advance from private sources e.g. Imperial Bank of Persia. Either plan would probably satisfy Persian Government.

Financial Adviser is opposed to a loan of any fixed amount as sum which will be needed cannot be foreseen and would confine guarantee to cost of (1) transport and (2) extra pay for active service which Cossack division always receive. No other category of expenditure would be admitted unless certified to be necessary by Military Advisers. Actual charges made would be examined jointly before payment by British Financial and Military Commission.

I am communicating these views to Prime Minister who realizes of course that financial proposals involved required⁶ assent of His Majesty's Government.

Repeated to India and Political Bagdad for General Officer Commanding in Chief 320 M, copy to Kasvin.

⁶ The text as sent read: 'require'.

No. 507

Memorandum on the Persian situation by Mr. G. P. Churchill¹

[C 4966/82/34]

Confidential

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 9, 1920*

The Persian Situation underwent a complete change during the month of June. The Shah arrived at Tehran on June 2nd and it soon became clear that he was determined to get rid of Vosouk-ed-Dowleh, the Prime Minister who signed the Anglo-Persian Agreement.

The Bolsheviks landed at Enzeli in the middle of May and Vosouk-ed-Dowleh had asked for considerable British support which he did not get. Instead we decided to withdraw our forces in Eastern Persia, and our western forces withdrew to Kazvin in the face of the Bolsheviks. Mr. Norman succeeded Sir Percy Cox at Tehran on June 10th and found that is [*sic*] was useless to continue to support Vosouk-ed-Dowleh, who had become very unpopular and had determined to withdraw from Office.

A because the Shah did not like him

B because we did not support him, and

C because he was ill and tired of office.

¹ This memorandum was prepared for Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Norman saw the Shah several times and discussed the situation fully with H.M. on June 25. Vosouk-ed-Dowleh resigned and was succeeded by Mushir-ed-Dowleh who is a Statesman of Western ideas and Education, but greatly lacking in determination. His professed policy appears to be:—

- (A) To continue the policy of Anglo-Persian co-operation on the basis of the agreement.
- (B) To summon the Persian Parliament ('Majliss') and submit the agreement to it for approval.
- (C) To consider the agreement in abeyance till that has taken place.
- (D) To govern Persia on Constitutional lines with a Parliament.
- (E) To gain popularity in Persia by including notorious Nationalists in his Cabinet.
- (F) To ask for British financial support.

In the mean time the Bolsheviks are menacing the capital. They have landed various bodies of men on the southern coast of the Caspian sea and with the help of local malcontents (of whom Kuchik Khan, the leader of the Jangalis, is one) are advancing along the mountain routes marked in the annexed map.² The result is that a state of panic exists at Tehran and many people are making preparations to evacuate.

Mr. Norman has urgently appealed for the promise of British Military assistance from Norperforce at Kazvin in case of necessity. The Persian forces at Tehran are unreliable and it may be necessary to send some British troops to cover the Evacuation of the Europeans from Tehran if that becomes necessary.

I should add that this sort of thing is no new phenomenon at Tehran and it may be hoped that things will settle down again by the Autumn.

The Majliss will probably not assemble this year at any rate and this Cabinet will probably not last very long. The complexion of the next Cabinet and the fate of the Anglo-Persian agreement will probably depend on the extent of military force we are able to show in Persia and the amount of financial assistance we are prepared to afford to the Persian Govt.

G. P. CHURCHILL

² Not reproduced.

No. 508

Earl Curzon (Spa) to Lord Hardinge (Received July 11, 9.45 a.m.)

No. 37 Telegraphic [C 984/25/34]

Urgent

SPA, July 10,¹ 1920, 1.15 a.m.

Sent to-day to Teheran No. 1.

Your telegram No. 460.²

I am afraid I cannot ask His Majesty's Government to agree to continuance of subsidy to Shah.

¹ The date of despatch to Tehran of Spa telegram No. 1 (cf. No. 504, n. 1); its repetition to the Foreign Office should have been dated July 11. ² Of July 6, not printed.

Apart from the fact that payment of subsidy was strictly conditional on his retention and loyal support of Vossuk-ed-Dowleh—conditions which have certainly not been fulfilled—policy of paying sovereign of an independent state, with whom we are in close relations, in order to ensure his fidelity either to our interests or to agreement concluded between our respective Governments appears to me fundamentally unsound.

Once principle is re-admitted I can see no reason why it should ever terminate.

The Shah is not such a pauper as to be dependent on us for subsistence and ought not to require payment for a loyalty which is even more to his own interest than it is to ours.

I am sorry if this will make difference in the attitude of His Majesty; but if it be so, case for continuing this form of support seems to me to be weakened rather than strengthened.

I am anxious to give you every support but it is useless to press upon me what must appear from our recent correspondence to be an impossible demand.

No. 509

Lord Hardinge to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 371 Telegraphic [C 911/243/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 10, 1920, 6 p.m.*

My telegram No. 366 of 7th July.¹

Anglo-Persian Oil Company anxious to complete negotiations for settlement of outstanding claims with Persian Government, and have suggested that Prince Firuz should report to his Government recommending signature (presumably by himself) be authorised at once.

We have deprecated this proposal, and are suggesting that company, if necessary, telegraph résumé of proposed agreement to Mr. A. Smith for submission to Persian Government, who could then authorise some person to sign for them.

Please telegraph urgently whether Mr. A. Smith has sufficient information provided by McLintock to advise Persian Government to authorise signature of agreement as negotiated by McLintock forthwith, or whether above mentioned further résumé or full text is required in Tehran.

¹ No. 505.

No. 510

Earl Curzon (Spa) to Lord Hardinge (Received July 13, 3.50 p.m.)

No. 55 Telegraphic [C 1233/56/34]

SPA, *July 13, 1920, 12.35 p.m.*

Following sent to-day to Teheran No. 2.

Arrangement just concluded between His Majesty's Government and Soviet Government as a condition of resumption of negotiations in London¹

¹ See 131 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 2369–72.

contains a pledge that Soviet Government will refrain from any attempt by military action against British interests or British Empire. This undertaking is specially devised for protection of Persia and should alleviate claims² of Persian Government about Bolshevik invasion of Mazanderan or Khorassan, from which Soviet Government will be called upon to desist. Our difficulty arises from fact that it is apparently difficult to discriminate between Russian Bolsheviks and Persian Bolsheviks. *Vide* your telegram No. 464.³

² This word read 'alarms' in the text filed in the Tehran archives.

³ See No. 503, n. 1. In this telegram Mr. Norman had reported the Persian Prime Minister as having said of hostile forces which had landed at Meshed-i-Sar that 'Bolsheviks in question' were 'more probably Persian than Russian'.

No. 511

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 14, 11.15 a.m.)

No. 483 Telegraphic [C 1278/458/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *July 13, 1920, 1.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 472.¹

Situation in East Persia is such as to . . .² imperative to demand retention of our troops in Khorassan for some months to come.

Precise intentions of Bolsheviks in Transcaspia are uncertain, but I am convinced that it is only the presence of our troops that prevents them from invading Persia from there.

They are probably aware of numbers and disposition of our forces, but ignorant of extent to which we are prepared to re-inforce these and it is probably this ignorance which renders them apprehensive of aggression from our side and deters them from any forward movement.

Most probable forecast is that they will appoint notorious brigand Khudaverdi Bolshevik Commissary in Khurassan, and push forward a force of Persian Bolsheviks collected in Transcaspia to support him.

With such a movement we could doubtless deal, and if invaders suffered a sufficiently severe defeat their Russian friends might not dare to attempt to avenge it. Results of an invasion would be disastrous both to Persia and to ourselves. Persia already deprived of revenues of Azerbaijan, Gilan and Mazanderan would lose those of Khorassan and Seistan as well, and financial rehabilitation of country would become impossible. Bolshevik propaganda would be stimulated everywhere and Bolsheviks would be in a position to threaten capital from the East as well as from the North, and to cut off any Persian force operating against the rebels in Mazanderan.

Eventually communications with Ispahan would similarly be threatened and only line of retreat from capital left to Persian Government and ourselves would be that by Hamadan and Kermanshah towards Bagdad. Our Consul-

¹ Of July 8, not printed.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'such as imperatively to demand'.

General and Bank would have to be withdrawn from Meshed and Consul in Seistan, and Bank there, would eventually have to follow.

Our prestige would be shattered not only in Persia but throughout the East and we should have Bolshevism on our Indian frontiers. Attitude of Afghanistan is at present uncertain but there can be no doubt that Afghans will eventually range themselves on winning side. His Majesty's Consul-General at Meshed whose reports become daily more pessimistic shares my view³ and chief manager of Imperial Bank of Persia told me yesterday that in the event of our troops retiring he would feel obliged to withdraw Bank from Meshed as a measure of precaution even should our retirement not be immediately followed by a Bolshevik advance.

Sent to India.

Copies to Kasvin and General Officer Commanding, Bagdad.

³ The text as sent read: 'more alarming, entirely shares my view'. Mr. Norman repeated two of these telegrams, dated July 9 and 16, in his Nos. 501 and 502 of July 18 to the Foreign Office, not printed.

No. 512

Lord Hardinge to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 377 Telegraphic [C 1378/56/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 15, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 475 (of July 9).¹

War Office have not authorised advance towards Resht. They are of opinion that such an operation would only increase our military commitments indefinitely while no definite result could be hoped for.

General Head Quarters Mesopotamia informed.

¹ No. 506.

No. 513

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 19, 9.50 a.m.)

No. 503 Telegraphic [C 1581/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *July 18, 1920, 4 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 377.¹

Please see Military Attaché's telegram to War Office C. 36 of July 18th with which I am in general agreement.²

Such an advance would be of very great assistance to our policy here and in view of arrangement referred to [in] Lord Curzon's telegram No. 55 to Foreign Office from Spa,³ risk would appear to be slight if as I presume to be the case His Majesty's Government have means of obliging Soviet

¹ No. 512.

² Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

³ No. 510.

Government to keep their word, for in the absence of Russian Bolsheviks, for whom British troops would have to meet, would not be formidable.⁴

Repeated to India—Bagdad for General Officer Commanding 336 M.
Copy to Norperforce.

* Lord Hardinge and Lord Curzon minuted as follows: '... I hope the W[ar] O[ffice] may revise their views, but the S. of S. for War and the C.I.G.S. have appeared so short-sighted previously that I doubt if they will agree. None of this would have happened if we had held the Caspian and the Batoum-Baku line. H.'

'We have surely realised by now that W.O. don't care a brass button about Persia. Of course the retreat from Enzeli and Resht was an idiotic blunder. But once done we shall never get W.O. to retrace it. They are much more likely to propose withdrawal from Kazvin.

'Still we might ask their opinion about the B[ritish] M[ilitary] A[ttaché's] proposal. C 20/7.'

On the following day a letter was received in the Foreign Office from the War Office saying that 'in reply to a telegram from the General Officer Commanding, Mesopotamia, proposing to give discretionary powers to the General Officer Commanding Norperforce to move in the direction of Resht should Persian operations develop, the War Office has definitely vetoed this proposal'.

No. 514

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 382 Telegraphic [C 2370/2370/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 19, 1920, 6 p.m.* *

Your telegrams Nos. 486 and 487 (of 13th July;¹ General situation).

Position described therein cannot be regarded as other than most unsatisfactory. If I understand your telegrams correctly, Persian Prime Minister refuses to avail himself for purpose of defending the country of the balance of the two million sterling loan, or of the services of British officers of military Commission except General Dickson himself; further that Financial Adviser is to have no real *locus standi* pending ratification of agreement by Medjliss. This amounts in fact to complete disregard of existence of agreement. On the other hand Shah has pressed for presence of British troops at the capital. Prime Minister draws presumably the monthly subsidy of tomans 350,000 and only three days ago Persian Chargé d'Affaires here was pressing for help from His Majesty's Government in form of munitions and arms.

Agreement of 1919 was duly signed by responsible Persian Minister and your predecessor, and while I pressed late Minister for Foreign Affairs repeatedly to take necessary steps to submit it to Medjliss, such ratification was not *sine qua non* to its validity. On the contrary His Majesty's Government have given effect to clauses of agreement by loan, by despatch of officers whom Persian Government agreed to pay and by revision of customs tariff.

In these circumstances it is impossible to regard agreement as having no existence until Medjliss has been convoked and has passed it. You should

¹ These telegrams are not printed; see, however, No. 525, n. 2.

see Prime Minister and explain to him that Persian Government cannot have it both ways, i.e. treat agreement as in existence, so far as advantages to Persia are concerned, and are² cancelled in so far as it involves obligations; neither can suspension of agreement be reconciled with incessant appeal to us for help. If Prime Minister declines to recognise his predecessor's commitments, he must not be surprised if consequences are withdrawal of British advisers financial and military, and stoppage of monthly subsidy. You should explain position to Mushir-ed-Dowleh and point out to him anomalies and dangers of situation.

Unless and until financial and military advisers are withdrawn they must receive from the Persian Government their full salaries as agreed upon whether employed by them or not. You should emphasize this to the Prime Minister.

Repeated to India.

³ This word read 'as' in the text filed in the Tehran archives.

No. 515

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 24, 10 a.m.)

No. 509 Telegraphic [C 2158/82/34]

TEHRAN, July 20, 1920, 1 p.m.

I had long talk with Prime Minister to-day about general situation.

He said that negotiations with Nationalists in Azerbaijan were proceeding satisfactorily.

All the tribal Chiefs in Eastern part of that Province were uniting to attack rebels in Gilan.

A party of rebels who had landed at Bender-i-Gez had been driven back to their boats by Cossacks and one boat had been damaged by artillery fire.

Colonel Starosselski was starting for Mazanderan taking with him as hostages local magnates whose detention by late Government had been cause of disturbances in that Province. He anticipated no trouble in dealing with situation here; arrangements regarding expedition to (? North) . . .¹ now complete but Government were still anxiously awaiting an indication of amount of help in way of arms and money which they might expect from His Majesty's Government.

In Luristan rebels had been defeated and all danger was over for the moment.

In Capital martial law had been proclaimed and press warned not to reveal movements of troops or to (? advocate) Bolshevism. Three insignificant papers have been suppressed for disregarding this admonition.

All reasonable people appear satisfied with policy of Government and only extremists and partisans of late Cabinet were agitating against it.²

¹ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent from Tehran read: 'situation. The arrangements regarding the expedition to the north were now'.

² The text in the Tehran archives here contains two additional paragraphs: 'I urged the

I alluded³ to question of reforms especially financial and pointed out that even with help afforded by monthly advances country would be ruined in two or three months if they were not introduced at once.

Prime Minister said that Government would consider this question immediately after that of Afghan frontier.⁴ They had already appointed a Committee of ten influential persons to deal with it and submit a report with special reference to reduction of expenditure and preparation of a budget.

I said that Government should at once take public into their confidence by making a statement of the true financial position of country which nobody realized and should summon without delay the meeting of notables already agreed on and lay facts before them.

Prime Minister said that organ of Government would publish explanations on subject and that latter measure would be shortly taken.

This question has given me much trouble during last few days. Attitude of Government (? towards) British (? advisers) and agreement generally has been precisely that foreshadowed in my telegram 427⁵ and at one moment financial adviser, discouraged by insufficient support afforded him, threatened to resign. Cabinet then said that if he did so they would do the same, whereupon in order to avert what would undoubtedly be serious if not irretrievable disaster he consented to remain at his post. He is to see Prime Minister this afternoon with a view to arrival at an arrangement satisfactory to both.

I urged Prime Minister to lose no time in despatching to . . .⁶ Mesopotamia the Mission instructed to obtain from authors⁷ a *Fetwa* condemning Bolshevism which would have a powerful and far-reaching effect in Persia.⁸

He replied that necessary arrangements were nearly completed.

I also asked him to develop propaganda being organized in Persia itself and also to take steps to make better known (? help) which country is receiving from Great Britain, for example by drawing attention to benefits derived at expense of British traders from new Customs Tariff.

He promised to consider this.

Altogether I do not think situation bad or prospect too unpromising if only it is possible to keep Government whose intentions I feel sure to be good from wasting too much time in carrying them out.

great importance of summoning Parliament as soon as possible, without wasting time by holding new elections which would moreover be illegal and, in the meanwhile, of educating public opinion regarding the policy of the Government.

'Prime Minister said that the Government would decide this question within a few days. Their difficulty was that a number of the candidates chosen on the last occasion had notoriously been returned by corrupt methods, so that it might be necessary in some cases to hold new elections. Substitutes would also have to be found for the five members of the Cabinet who were deputies. It was unlikely, therefore, that the Assembly would actually be able to meet in less than three months.'

³ The text as sent read: 'I turned'.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'that of elections'.

⁵ No. 491.

⁶ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'to the Holy Places of'.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'from authorities'.

⁸ See No. 503.

They are certainly displaying greater energy and industry than reputation of some of most prominent amongst them would lead one to expect and if they receive adequate support from us I believe that they will continue to do so.

Sent to India. Copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

No. 516

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 24, 10.40 a.m.)

No. 510A¹ Telegraphic [C 2159/82/34]

TEHRAN, July 21, 1920, 5.50 a.m.

My telegram No. 509.²

Financial Adviser's conversation with Prime Minister did not as I hoped result in agreement as latter declined to reconsider his refusal to allow Financial (? Commission) to work in various Ministries pending acceptance by Parliament of Anglo-Persian Agreement though he undertakes that Government will consider proposals for reforms and if they are approved will put them in force at once.

I confessed³ that when I made with Prime Minister agreement on which he insisted as a condition of taking office and to which he now gives this interpretation, I imagined his intention to be merely that Commission should work as unobtrusively as possible and that their proposals should appear to emanate from Government for such was the impression which he gave me.

I have repeatedly insisted on this view but never with success.

Financial Adviser who has for some time been ill and is going away for a second⁴ fortnight's change has asked me to telegraph to you as follows.

Begins.

...⁵ which exist now and which will exist so far as I can foresee for a long time make any chance of financial reform hopeless.

I find myself in this dilemma.

1. If I resign say in a month's time the Foreign Office may say that I have wrecked ...⁶

2. If I stay Treasury will say that I have obtained six months' subsidies on strength of confident anticipations of financial reform and there will be nothing done at the end of four months and need for subsidy⁷ will be as urgent as ever.

¹ This telegram is numbered '511' in Tehran archives. It was drafted on July 20.

² No. 515.

³ In the text as sent from Tehran ~~this~~ word read: 'confess'.

⁴ This word was not in the text as sent.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'My opinion is that the military and political conditions which exist'.

⁶ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'the convention'.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'subsidies'.

Reasons which lead me to regard situation as hopeless are as follows.

1. We shall never recover military prestige lost at Enzeli and withdrawal from Meshed will complete our disgrace.

2. Break-up of Military Commission is also a severe blow to British influence.

3. Colonel Starosselski will dominate Teheran on his return from a successful expedition; in case of non-success there will of course be disaster.

4. If thieving goes on unchecked for another four months financial situation will be a deficit of two million tomans instead of one.

5. (? Psychological) effect of treating Financial Adviser and his staff as Pariahs for four months will render any moral influence on my part nil and I have no power but moral influence.

6. Delay will make it impossible to get Garbett out by autumn and this postpones land revenue reform for another year.

I propose to take no definite action for a fortnight.

If at the end of that time present Government or at any rate present Finance Minister is in power or if Government has not changed its ways I propose to resign.

In the interval I beg you to get advice for me from London on a cabled version of this memorandum. I shall in any case take a definite decision by middle of September.

I agree with what Financial Adviser says under 1 and 6.

As regards 2 Military Commission have not broken up at all and this has been officially and publicly stated.

I believe that they will return with undiminished prestige and I know their temporary absence is already regretted.

As regards 3 Colonel Starosselski's position will doubtless be strengthened by victorious campaign but I doubt whether it will be so to such a degree as to render him irremovable especially in view of Prime Minister's pledge.

Whether 4 is true depends on ability of Government to apply reforms for some months without European aid.

I disagree with 5 for same reasons as with 2.

Of course if Government are false to all their pledges as Financial Adviser now expects them to be, I (? think) he is amply justified in all that he says . . .⁸ if he now resigns Government will certainly fall and no other would be capable of obtaining assent of Parliament to agreement, without which so long as we hold by that instrument we shall never regain confidence of Persians lost to us through our association first with Russia and later with Vossuk-ed-Dowleh Cabinet. We should then have to take an entirely new line and make up our minds to dispense with popular approval altogether.

On the other hand if Financial Adviser retains his post on conditions laid down by Prime Minister and latter's hopes of introducing reforms unaided

⁸ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'as Financial Adviser now expects them to be, but I do not, he is amply justified in all that he says. If he now resigns'.

are not fulfilled, country will find itself once more without resources when subsidy ceases even if Parliament has accepted agreement.

Addressed to India. Copies to Bagdad and Norperforce.

No. 517

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 23, 10.30 a.m.)

No. 518 Telegraphic [C 2051/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, July 22, 1920, 9 a.m.

My telegrams (? 4) 75¹ and 498.²

Prime Minister this morning said that though Persian Government hoped to induce Kuchik Khan by negotiation to make submission they had to be prepared for possibility of failure to do so and had accordingly instructed Persian Chargé d'Affaires in London to lay before you the following summary of financial and military help which they would require in order to suppress movement by force. 5,000 rifles with 2,500,000 rounds and 1,000 shells for Schneider (? mountain) guns, 1,000 Mills bombs and £1,000,000 in money.

He begged me to press for³ these (? demand)-s.

Rifles would be reserved for regular troops, irregular being supplied with old arms of different calibres.

Tribes whose aid would be enlisted were already armed. An emissary left Tehran several days ago to negotiate with Kuchik Khan.

Copy Bagdad and Norperforce. Sent to India.

¹ No. 506.

² Of July 17, not printed. This had requested an early reply to the proposals put forward in No. 506 for financing the contemplated expedition.

³ The text as sent read: 'to support'.

No. 518

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 384 Telegraphic [C 1718/1548/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 22, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegrams Nos. 489 and 492 (of 14th and 16th July.¹ Persian deportees).

I cannot but view with misgiving the return of these undesirables to the capital.

¹ These telegrams are not printed. In his No. 489 Mr. Norman had reported that the late Persian Government had 'permitted Muin-ut-Tajar and Mumtaz-ed-Dowleh to return from Kashan some time ago', that the present government had allowed 'the remaining three deportees to return', and that they had been given a public reception in Tehran and afterwards had an audience of the Shah. (Cf. Vol. IV, No. 769.) In his telegram No. 492 Mr. Norman had enquired whether H.M.G. had any objection to the passage through Mesopotamia to Persia of Nizam-es-Sultaneh and 'whether Prince Suleiman Mirza and his brother now detained in Mesopotamia itself may also come back'.

Their past behaviour shows that their sympathies never lay in our direction; and thus their presence in Teheran will be only too likely to prove source of considerable embarrassment to us should present Cabinet either fall or be reshuffled to include them.

No. 519

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 23, 11.30 a.m.)

No. 516 Telegraphic [C 2049/82/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, July 22, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 382.¹

Seeing that communication which I am instructed to make would at once bring about fall of present Government I beg leave to suspend action till I am assured that His Majesty's Government, having considered a report on present undoubtedly most unsatisfactory situation which I am about to submit,² decide that this is best course to pursue.

¹ No. 514.

² This report was contained in Mr. Norman's lengthy telegram No. 523 (Nos. 522-4 below).

No. 520

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 24, 10.30 a.m.)

No. 521 Telegraphic [C 2156/1548/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, July 23, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 384.¹

I will at once inform Prime Minister of Your Lordship's views in so far as Kashan exiles are concerned though I have no reason to suppose that he has any intention of including them in a Cabinet.²

Am I to tell him also that His Majesty's Government object to return of Nizam-es-Sultaneh and of Suleiman Mirza and his brother?³ If I do so we may again make enemies of some people who have now become reconciled to us and are willing to work with us.

Repeated to Bagdad, copy Norperforce.

Repeated to India.

¹ No. 518.

² In his telegram No. 522 of July 24 (not printed) Mr. Norman said that the Prime Minister had confirmed that he had no intention of including any of the Kashan exiles in his Cabinet.

³ See No. 518, n. 1.

No. 521

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 26, 10.35 a.m.)

No. 519 Telegraphic [C 2235/56/34]

TEHRAN, July 23, 1920, 9.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 465.¹

Persian Ambassador Constantinople² will proceed to Moscow as special envoy of Persian Government.

His instructions are to demand from Soviet Government abstention from all interference in Persian affairs, from provision of moral or material support to Persian insurgents and from all propaganda in Persia. He has been instructed that³ if these demands are granted to inform Soviet Government that Persian Government are ready to conclude a treaty of friendship with them but I objected to these instructions as implying Political recognition which His Majesty's Government themselves had not yet granted. Instructions will therefore be modified and Soviet Government only be told that Persian Government are ready to establish commercial relations with them on a solid basis and to negotiate (with them) postal and telegraphic convention.

Envoy will also demand certain rectifications of frontier and fulfilment (? of those)⁴ promises made by Soviet Government including annulment of treaty of Turkmanchai⁵ and better terms for Mussulmen in Caucasus.

First three points are of course included in agreement just concluded between His Majesty's Government and Soviet Government (see Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs' Telegram from Spa to Foreign Office No. 55)⁶ but it seems unlikely that rest of this rather ambitious programme can be carried out without British Support for which however Persian Government have not yet asked.

Sent to India. Copies to Bagdad, Norperforce.

¹ No. 503.

² Mushaver-el-Mamalek.

³ This word was not in the text as sent from Tehran.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'of sixteen'. Cf. No. 446, n. 3.

⁵ For the text of this treaty of 1828, see *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 15, pp. 669-75.

⁶ No. 510.

No. 522

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 25, 8.45 p.m.)

No. 523 (Part 1) Telegraphic [C 2176/82/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, July 24, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 382¹ and my telegram No. 516.²

Situation is indeed unsatisfactory but it is also inevitable result of events of past two years.

There is reason to believe that a decision to set commissions to work at

¹ No. 514.

² No. 519.

once would be popular in South but it would not be so here or in North generally which is unluckily more important for reasons already explained and also because of widespread though probably mistaken belief that existence of Anglo-Persian Agreement, and presence of British troops and advisers in Persia, which is one of its results, has brought Bolshevik danger on the country and that latter would disappear if these were withdrawn.

Prime Minister is well aware that His Majesty's Government regard agreement as fully in force and I have already used to him, as coming from myself, many of the arguments advanced by Your Lordship.³ A Nationalist and Constitutional Government like the present cannot however, consistently with their principles and with conditions on which, with our consent, they took office, and which have gained for them the support of moderate people, at once impose agreement on the country. They can only use such methods as they think most effectual to turn public opinion in its favour and thus prepare the way for its acceptance by Parliament. These methods are not only in some cases provokingly slow but also for the most part objectionable to us because they (? bracket)⁴ acceptance of all help which we are willing to give with a show of independence. If they remain in power we must for a time put up with this state of things, contemplate triumph of our enemies over our supposed discomfiture and suffer perhaps in the eyes of ignorant a temporary loss of prestige. We must be prepared to see activity of British Commissions temporarily restricted and even risk disappointment of Government's hope that they will be able to get agreement accepted in the end.

I do not believe, with some, that Government are merely trying to get out of us all that they can and will abandon us in the end, or with others that though their intentions are good, they lack energy and courage to carry them out.

In spite of some mistakes, notably perhaps an exaggerated deference to public opinion, their internal policy so far has been firm and sensible and on the whole well received, and they are doing their best in face of considerable difficulties to organise defence of country against Bolsheviks and rebels.

Prime Minister is confident that financial situation produced by his policy will be less serious when monthly advances stop than I anticipate. He counts on effecting large reduction in expenditure and intends at once to carry out through the agency of the most honest Persians obtainable the most important reforms recommended by Financial Adviser. He believes that by these means he will be able to avoid great increase in deficit and is anyhow prepared to face consequences of his acts by dispensing if necessary with further help after October. He has promised shortly to summon proposed assembly of notables and lay before them financial situation, and also to make public facts of case. I have advocated this course in the hope that their disclosure may give rise to a general demand for immediate intervention of Financial Commission, but Prime Minister does not anticipate this.

End of part one.

Repeated to India.

³ See No. 514.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'combine'.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 25, 2.20 p.m.)

No. 523 (Part 2) Telegraphic [C 2176/82/34]

TEHRAN, July 24, 1920, 3 p.m.¹

Part two begins:—

Chief advantages of working with present Government are that they are relatively, and the most important amongst them absolutely, honest in money matters and will do their best to prevent their subordinates from robbing, that they have the confidence of all the best elements in the country and that they alone are likely to be able to obtain wide approval for the agreement and secure its acceptance by Medjliss, to which I presume we still attach importance seeing that, as I understand, this is necessary preliminary to its acceptance by League of Nations and is demanded by a large section of Parliamentary opinion in England.

From a Persian point of view their retention of power offers the only chance of preserving Azerbaijan by peaceful means, which is essential to the success of any scheme of Financial Reform and by far the best prospect of reconciling Gilan and Mazanderan.

Moreover till they are proved to have violated the conditions on which they took office we appear bound to support them.

If it is thought immaterial to get agreement accepted by Medjliss and only important to put it in force at once it will be easy to upset Government in spite of confidence which they enjoy because they fully realise that they cannot continue to exist without our support.

As a more Radical Cabinet would be altogether hostile to agreement we could only call into power a more Conservative one.

Such a Government would doubtless undertake to do what we want but it is uncertain whether, without strong military support from us, they would be able to fulfil their engagements any better than did Cabinet of Vossuk-ed-Dowleh who for lack of such support could keep theirs only on paper.

They would certainly be more corrupt than present Government and financial adviser is so convinced that even if schemes of reform were sanctioned this unfortunate quality would defeat his efforts to carry them out, that he has already categorically stated that he could not work with them.

If then such a Government really tried to impose agreement on country and there were consequently, as there probably would be, disturbances in capital and elsewhere in the province possibly too serious to be suppressed without aid from us, we should have to be prepared to intervene with a certain amount of force and perhaps with more than is now at our disposal here.

Before calling such a Government to power we must (? decide) whether in view of expense and present tendencies of (public opinion) at home we are prepared to do this. If not it is wise to leave in office a Government who do not need to use troops for this purpose. Ends [*sic*] of part 2.

Sent to India.

¹ Parts 1 and 2 of this telegram were despatched in reverse order.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 25, 2.30 p.m.)

No. 523 (Part 3) Telegraphic [C 2176/82/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, July 24, 1920, 9 p.m.

Part III. Begins

Support of a Conservative Government of old type would also entail loss of confidence of enlightened and progressive elements in country which we are, I hope, beginning to regain and renunciation at least for some time of all hope of obtaining their support and cooperation in our Policy of which we have now good chance.

Two further alternatives present themselves. One is to denounce present agreement on our own initiative and negotiate another which would be free from unpleasant associations of present one and thus be more agreeable to Persian public opinion. This (? would) hardly make us very popular¹ but as present Government are confident of getting present agreement accepted I can see no sufficient reason for adopting it at present. If however it becomes apparent the chances of present agreement passing Medjliss are seriously diminishing, we may be driven to try it in order to avoid sole remaining course which is to shut down our enterprises, withdraw our commissions and troops, and probably also our diplomatic and Consular establishments from Northern Persia and make other arrangements for defence of Mesopotamia and India, leaving this region to anarchy and Bolshevism.

If, having decided to continue our support of present Government, we find that they are unduly delaying assembly of Medjliss, I might be instructed once more to urge its immediate convocation and fact that these instructions had been given might be (? given) publicity² by, say, a statement in Parliament, and telegraphed here by Reuter. This step would hasten matters and at the same time help to convince public here that we are sincerely desirous of seeing Constitutional Government working in Persia and thus to improve prospects of agreement. I do not however recommend its adoption for the moment because I do not wish to appear distrustful of the very categorical assurances which I have received that there will be no avoidable delay.

In the meantime it might be well to take steps to earmark all available security to cover sums which Persian Government already owe us. I shall telegraph again on this subject after consultation with financial adviser.

If course which I here advocate, having been approved, turns out in a few months to be impracticable, for which I must, of course, bear the blame, it will still be possible to revert to our former policy of working with more conservative element, though it may be necessary to do this under the auspices of another Minister.

In this event new Government would still have at their disposal the 1,500,000 tomans due to Persia by Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

Sent to India. Copy Baghdad, Norperforce.

¹ The text as sent read: 'This policy might at once make us very popular'.

² The text as sent read: 'made public'.

No. 525

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 388 Telegraphic [C 2057/56/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 27, 1920, 1 p.m.*

Your telegram 518 (of 22nd July:¹ operations against Kuchik Khan).

Request for munitions etc., now submitted is surely inconsistent with opinions expressed in your telegrams Nos. 486 and 487 (of 13th and 14th July respectively).² I am not prepared to make recommendations for these supplies to competent departments of His Majesty's Government.

¹ No. 517.

² Not printed. In his No. 486 Mr. Norman transmitted a message from Gen. Dickson to Lt.-Col. A. Moens (attached to the Foreign Office as Liaison Officer for matters connected with the Military Commission) in which the General said: 'Am strongly recommending to Minister that no further issues of arms or military equipment should be made to Persian Government at present.' In his No. 487 Mr. Norman transmitted a further message from Gen. Dickson reporting an interview with the Persian Prime Minister on July 13 in which the latter 'also expressed desire that despatch of any further military officers or equipment which had already been asked for should be cancelled'.

No. 526

Sir A. Geddes¹ (Washington) to Earl Curzon (Received July 29, 3.40 p.m.)

No. 560 Telegraphic [C 2602/1234/34]

WASHINGTON, *July 28, 1920²*

Your telegram No. 602.³

There is I think no possibility of United States Government granting any loan to Persia.

I have made careful enquiry and State Department certainly has no negotiations in hand. I think I can also say definitely that United States Minister at Teheran has no (? instructions) from Secretary of State to discuss any matter concerning a loan to Persia.

On the other hand War Department is showing some interest in Persia and this suggests Standard Oil activity.

Also Colonel Haskell of American Relief Mission to Armenia seems to have had agents in Persia.

My enquiries are proceeding.

¹ H.M. Ambassador at Washington.

² The hour of despatch is not recorded.

³ Of July 19, not printed. In this Lord Curzon had asked Sir A. Geddes to 'ascertain discreetly' whether there was any foundation for a rumour 'said to be supported by activity of United States Minister, Teheran . . . to the effect that United States Government or financial group will offer loan of five million pounds to present or some subsequent Persian Cabinet'. The rumour had been reported by the Financial Adviser at Tehran in Mr. Norman's telegram No. 485 of July 13, not printed.

No. 527

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 396 Telegraphic [C 2156/1548/34]

Most secret. Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 30, 1920, 2 p.m.*

I learn from trustworthy informant that Persian Prime Minister has invited various Nationalists including Taki Zadeh to return to Persia and that in opinion of German Minister in Teheran presence of latter at the capital is very desirable. Reasons for this are the possible holding of new elections and the impending meeting of Parliament, though for the moment it would not be desirable for Taki Zadeh to work openly in interest of the Nationalists.

The above information confirms my conviction that Suliman Mirza and others should not have their return facilitated in any way. Presence of such individuals in Teheran in view of the critical situation could only have most undesirable consequences.¹

Above is strictly secret.

¹ In his telegram No. 391 of July 28 (not printed) Lord Curzon had informed Mr. Norman that H.M.G. could not 'consent to the return to Persia of Nizam-es-Sultaneh and Suleiman Mirza'; cf. No. 518, n. 1 and No. 520.

No. 528

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 31, 10.40 a.m.)

No. 544 Telegraphic [C 2728/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *July 30, 1920, 9 p.m.*

My telegram No. 542.¹

I found the Shah much depressed yesterday at prospect of evacuation of Menjil which he said must infallibly produce a panic here.

I pointed out the military advantages of movement as described to me by G.O.C. Norperforce but His Majesty replied with perfect truth that such an explanation would entirely fail to reassure the public.

Apart from stampede which would follow announcement of withdrawal we should witness a recrudescence of Bolshevik intrigue and agitation which have practically disappeared from Capital since fall of late Government because many people feeling that Great Britain was abandoning Persia and that occupation of Capital by Bolsheviks was inevitable would hasten to get on good terms with latter in order to save their own skins. This is also true. He therefore begged that Menzil [*sic*] might be held at all costs and that, if necessary, troops there might be reinforced from Kasvin. He said that he failed to understand the policy of His Majesty's Government who would neither allow British Force to attack insurgents nor give money to Persian Government to enable them to send their own troops to do so and

¹ Of July 28 (despatched on the 29th), not printed.

it is certainly a fact that further financial help is essential for this purpose, the monthly advance being totally insufficient for it and being moreover intended for a totally different object—I would therefore once more beg for an early answer to request of Persian Government on this subject (see my telegrams No. 475² and 498³).

No day passes without an enquiry from them as to whether I have received one.

Sent to India. Repeated to Bagdad No. 266. Copy to Norperforce.

² No. 506.

³ See No. 517, n. 2.

No. 529

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received July 31, 9.45 p.m.)

No. 548 Telegraphic [C 2768/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *July 31, 1920, 2.40 p.m.*

My telegram No. 544.¹

General Officer Commanding Norperforce has informed me that after a personal inspection on the spot he has decided to evacuate Menjil and that movement began last night.

I understand His Majesty's Government are now once more in touch with representatives of Soviet Government.² If this is so, would it not be possible to induce latter to observe their undertaking not to interfere in affairs of Persia, seeing that we are now in possession of their complicity in the different attacks now being launched against this country as well as in complementary propaganda carried on here?

Repeated to India.

¹ No. 528.

² See Vol. XII, Nos. 751 and 782.

No. 530

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 400 Telegraphic [C 2728/56/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 31, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 544 (of 30th July).¹ British forces at Menjil).

On receipt of your telegram No. 541 (of 28th July)² I pressed War Office not to reduce Norperforce by two battalions. Any instructions for their withdrawal did not, I understand, emanate from here.

While situation must be dealt with on merits from military point of view, I feel confident General Officer Commanding will so far as possible act in co-operation with you.

Should evacuation of Teheran become inevitable, you can, I feel convinced, count on all possible help from General Officer Commanding Baghdad and local Commander.

Reinforcements cannot be counted upon.

¹ No. 528.

² Not printed.

No. 531

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 401 Telegraphic [C 2785/82/34]

Confidential

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 31, 1920, 10 p.m.*

Time has come when it is desirable to take stock of Persian situation so far as it can be deduced from telegrams received here from Tehran. This seems to be required both for your guidance and for information of Persian Government.

Prior to your arrival and return of Shah, the policy pursued by British and Persian Governments in combination was support of Vossugh Ministry and execution of Anglo-Persian Agreement, which was already in effective operation. Since then there has been complete revulsion, in circumstances over which His Majesty's Government have been powerless to exercise control. Vossugh has disappeared; a Nationalist Minority has been installed; prominent Persians who had distinguished themselves by unfriendliness to Great Britain and to the agreement have been recalled; Starosselsky, whom it had been decided to dismiss, is master of situation; and position occupied by Great Britain appears to be one of no small humiliation. As regards agreement, the position is one which it is impossible to defend.

It is apparently in a state of suspended animation. At the very moment when Persian territory is being invaded, and efforts of British Military Commission are pre-eminently required for organisation of national forces, its doors are closed, the brigade which it had begun to organise is broken up, and a large number of capable British officers are left with nothing to do, until Persian Government choose to make up their mind to carry out their undertaking. The Financial Adviser, who had commenced to function and was rendering very valuable service, is not permitted to work; he reports all prospect of financial reform hopeless and appears unwilling to stay.¹

Your telegram No. 510A of 20th [21st] July² reports an attitude on part of Prime Minister which is completely at variance with your previous assurances. Further the Persian Government, inspired by some punctilio, which it is difficult to understand, decline to use loan upon which it has already without hesitation indented in connection with supply of munitions for elementary needs of country.

While they adopt this attitude, Persian Government nevertheless address to us, through you, or through Persian Chargé d'Affaires here, almost daily appeals for further financial assistance, for a subsidy for Shah, for rifles and ammunition, even for an advance of 1,000,000*l.* to defeat a robber incursion on the north, for the presence of a British force at Tehran, for the retention of British troops on the Caspian at Kasvin and in Khorassan, for payment of propaganda to resist the enemies of Persia, and even for payment of Cossack force which cannot possibly be described as friendly to our interests. These are the proceedings of a Government which is admittedly only kept in

¹ See No. 516.

² No. 516.

existence by British support, which is subsidised by British money, and with whose predecessor we recently concluded an agreement designed exclusively for the benefit of Persia and the preservation of Persia's independence.

We are seemingly invited to acquiesce in this situation in the hope that in three months' time the Persian Parliament, which no steps are taken to summon, will endorse an agreement, to which its Government thus openly shows its indifference. The prospect of its doing so seems to us exceedingly remote.

It is evident that this situation cannot be continued with advantage either to Persia or to Great Britain. Persian Government cannot, at the same time, claim all advantages of agreement and repudiate or ignore its obligations.

His Majesty's Government have throughout implored Persian Government to summon Medjliss and submit agreement to it. If the Parliament rejects or mutilates agreement, we shall without compunction desist from a course which is manifestly not supported by Persian opinion. In that case, agreement will be cancelled, all British troops will be withdrawn, and Persia will be left to look after herself. We do not know if Persian Government desire or contemplate with equanimity this result. On the other hand, if present Persian Government are sincere in professions of loyalty to agreement and mean to carry it through, they cannot act in interim as though it were dead, nor can they expect His Majesty's Government to leave British officers and officials in Persia with nothing to do and with chance of dismissal at end. Unless employment is found for them, there can be no alternative but to withdraw them altogether, and in that case their return may not be easy. You should speak seriously to Mushir-ed-Dowleh in sense of these instructions, explaining to him that His Majesty's Government have extended to him, and are still willing to extend to him, every consideration that is demanded by difficulties of situation, but that he cannot play fast and loose with international obligations or expect us to give un murmuring support to a Government which treats the Power upon whom it depends for its continuance with such scant respect. I trust that this explanation may enable you to obtain a clearer view of situation as it appears at this end.

Repeated to India.

No. 532

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 3, 2.50 a.m.)

No. 553 Telegraphic [C 2920/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, August 2, 1920, 5 p.m.

My telegram No. 542.¹

News of sudden evacuation of Menjil came as a complete surprise to Persian Government.

After communication made to me on July 28th by General Officer Commanding Norperforce (see my telegram No. 544)² I did indeed warn them

¹ See No. 528, n. 1.

² No. 528.

that such a step would be probably necessary but they were expecting a further delay of two or three weeks which would have given them time to make some other arrangements for defence of Capital.

They are now hastily collecting for this purpose all the Persian forces anywhere available but in order to do this they must have at their disposal a certain sum of money which they at present entirely lack, not only to move their troops, but also to (? pay subsidies.)³

As provision of necessary funds really admits of no delay I have been forced in continued absence of any reply from you to proposals which I have made on the subject, to assume responsibility of agreeing to extension for a further period of five months of time during which lien held by His Majesty's Government on receipts of southern customs has been released in favour of Imperial Bank of Persia⁴ and I trust that this action will be approved.

Persian Government will thus have at their disposal a credit of 500,000 tomans on which they will be able to draw from time to time as they may require and I have suggested to them that a small body of honest inspectors should be charged with duty of seeing that sums so acquired were properly spent.

I shall report on question of provision of arms and munitions of war, which, though necessary, is somewhat less urgent when I (? reply to) your telegram No. 388.⁵

As was to be expected political effect of withdrawal, following as it does on the evacuation of Enzeli and Resht, has been deplorable. My personal efforts to support Government have not availed to conceal from them the fact that I have so far never been in a position to convey to them any expression of approval or encouragement from His Majesty's Government while my failures to . . .⁶ various requests which I have made to latter on their behalf has produced on them most depressing effect.

They now feel that present withdrawal is merely preliminary step which will be followed in due course by complete abandonment of their country to a Bolshevik invasion, which is at this moment only are (*sic*)⁷ threatening from direction of Azerbaijan than from that of Gilan, nor shall I be in a position to re-assure them on this point, unless and until I learn if proposals of General Officer Commanding-in-chief Mesopotamia (see my telegram No. 544)² have not been adopted by His Majesty's Government.

In a country like this where official secrecy has no existence apprehensions of Government are shared by thinking public in so far as there is one, in an exaggerated form, and it is, moreover, being said by influential people that His Majesty's Government have ordered their forces to leave Menjil to mark their disapproval of policy of this Cabinet and bring about its fall.

General situation is one of panic and though I have suggested to Government that reasons and advantages of evacuation should be made public, it is

³ The text as sent from Tehran here read: 'pay them'.

⁴ See No. 506, n. 5.

⁵ No. 525.

⁶ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'obtain replies to the'.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'only less threatening'.

unlikely that such an explanation will be widely read or if read believed. Further, since facts are not understood, our Military Prestige has at the same time suffered another severe blow, and retreat of our men before an enemy who did not seriously attack them is contrasted unfavourably with victory of Alb . . .⁸ a cheap and bloodless one gained by Persian troops in Mazanderan over a force greatly their superior in numbers while it is pointed out that it is these same Persian troops and not British who are about to defend the capital.

Despatch of reinforcements (? willing to) participate⁹ in task of delivering Persia from her present danger can alone redeem our reputation.

In the meantime General Champain telegraphs that there is as yet no sign of an enemy advance from Menjil and that his troops are in better position than before and can maintain themselves indefinitely at Kasvin unless enemy receive large Bolshevik reinforcements or a strong Bolshevik Army advances from direction of Azerbaijan.

He further states that in view of inactivity of enemy at Menjil he does not at present propose to withdraw British detachment now at Zinjan.

I doubt however whether these reassuring announcements will have much effect in calming fears of public.

Addressed to Bagdad No. 274 for General Officer Commanding. Copy to Norperforce.

⁸ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'with victory albeit'.

⁹ The text as sent read: 'and our active participation in'

No. 533

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 407 Telegraphic [C 2920/56/34]**

Immediate

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 5, 1920, 2 p.m.

Your telegram No. 554 of 1st August.¹

With reference to evacuation of Menjil, which you have rightly interpreted, it appears to me that attitude of Shah furnishes such a favourable opportunity for plain speaking to His Majesty as has not hitherto occurred.

The idea that there is any collusion between us and the Bolsheviks is, needless to say, absolutely unfounded.

On the other hand, unless present Cabinet at Tehran agrees to act loyally in the matter of the agreement of 1919, it may well become impossible, in view of the general temper prevailing here, as instanced in the debate in the House of Commons on 1st [2nd] August,² to afford any material help, military or financial, to Persian Government, and withdrawal of British troops may be forced upon us by military considerations. Opinion is universally entertained that it is imperative to reduce our external commitments

¹ Not printed. In this Mr. Norman had reported an interview he had had with the Shah on the afternoon of Aug. 1.

² 132 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 2078-2116.

to the minimum. In these circumstances it would be well that you should explain to the Shah the actual position, and let him clearly understand beyond all possibility of doubt that should the present Cabinet not find it possible to co-operate loyally with us, and act upon the agreement, there is little that he or his country can hope from us, and Persia will run risk of being ruined by her own vacillation. We cannot consent to be put off by vague prospects of what Medjliss may or may not do three months hence or acquiesce in a policy of do-nothing in interim. To judge by your description of the Shah's feelings at the present time, it ought not to be difficult for you to exercise your influence with His Majesty to secure the active co-operation of his Government as postulated in my telegram No. 401 of 31st July.³

Repeated to India.

³ No. 531.

No. 534

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 8, 8 p.m.)

No. 562 Telegraphic [C 3302/82/34]

TEHRAN, August 6, 1920, 2.15 p.m.

Financial Adviser and Head of British Military Commission have asked me to lay before Your Lordship their personal views of political situation.

They have made this request because they feel as I do that only policy by which His Majesty's Government can attain their objects and safeguard British interests in Persia is that of lending whole-hearted support to present Government and that any other line of conduct must sooner or later lead to disaster.

The communication which I have received from General Dickson is as follows:

'It does not appear to be realized at home how intensely unpopular agreement was in Persia and how hostile public opinion had become to Vosuq's Cabinet before it fell. It was believed in Persia that notwithstanding pledges given agreement really aimed at destruction of her independence and that Vosuq and those acting with him had sold their country to British, for fact that money had been received by them for signing agreement could not be kept a secret. Secrecy with which agreement had been concluded, fact that Medjliss was not summoned and attempt made to create a packed Medjliss by resorting to most dishonest methods in carrying out elections, all added to conviction that Great Britain whom all nationalists and constitutionalists had hitherto regarded as friendly to Persia and supporter of their cherished constitutional liberties, was in reality no better than their hereditary foe, Russia, and now that Russia was down was attempting to play Russia's game on her account and was adopting Russian methods of bribing corrupt Persians to sell their country.

'The feeling daily grew that Great Britain was a bitter foe who must be rooted out of the country at any cost. Revolts in Azerbaijan and (? Caspian)

provinces were due to this feeling, and to it was also due spread of pro-Bolshevik propaganda, for it [was] thought that Bolsheviks could not be worse and might, if their professions of securing justice for down-trodden classes were sincere, be much better.

“The Vosuq policy was running the country rapidly into a sea of anarchy and revolution and any attempt to revive that policy now would certainly lead to same result.

“The only way to save policy underlying agreement and, in fact, British interests generally was to take line which has been taken, that is to go with open hands to our old friends national and constitutional party and say: “The country is quite mistaken in supposing that we mean to play the Russian game for ourselves in Persia, for we are as we have always been, the friends of your country, of your independence, and of your constitutional liberties. In making agreement our only object was to help you to put your independence on a firm foundation so that we should have in Persia a strong and friendly neighbour instead of, as in the past, one who was unable to guard her own neutrality and was the plaything of any power who chose to use her as such. We realise that in not summoning Medjliss and in tinkering with elections the Vosuq Cabinet has not played the game either by us or by Persia. We now ask you, our old friends, to take the reins, summon an honest Medjliss, and lay matter frankly before it.”

“The conditions on which they took office viz. to continue to receive financial support while agreement remains in a state of suspended animation, are not as foolish as they seem at first sight, for they are a necessary condition of getting honest parliamentary support for agreement without which no mission, financial or military, has the least chance of success. The only men who can get agreement ratified by Medjliss are those at head of present Cabinet. They wield great influence in the country because of their reputation for honesty and because they are regarded as men who would not sell their country. Only way in which these men can get agreement through Medjliss, having in view state of feeling created by Vosuq policy, is for them to be able to prove to Medjliss that Britain is really friend of Persia and of her liberties, which they can, only by pointing to fact that Britain has placed reliance on men known to be supporters of the constitution, has agreed to existence of convention and everything connected with it remaining in abeyance till constitutionally examined and ratified by Medjliss, and has in meanwhile given her ungrudging support to a nationalist cabinet to enable it to administer the country.

“The Cabinet are convinced that with arguments such as these they will be able to overcome even most hostile elements in Medjliss, for, as they say, all reasonable men are convinced that Persia must have help from some foreign power, but they want to be assured that Power into whose arms they throw themselves will not take advantage of the fact to cut her throat. Their past experiences with Russia have made Persians suspicious, and with justice, of “friendship” of foreigners.

“I personally am convinced of honesty of present Cabinet and further that

line they are following is only one by which desired end, the ratification of agreement, can be brought about. If in present circumstances British officers were allowed to function suspicion would be created in the country that Cabinet had been bought as Vosuq was. Cabinet would thus lose confidence of the country and with it possibility of getting agreement ratified by Medjliss.

'Disagreeable as it is for British officers to be in position which they now occupy, and for no one more so than for myself, I fully realise necessity for line taken by Cabinet, members of which are quite open and frank, and in fact exceedingly friendly. With unqualified support of Medjliss and of Constitutional Party as given to Mr. Norman task of British reformers will be comparatively easy one but without this it is impossible. That it is intention of present Cabinet to secure for us such support, and that policy is the only one by which they can achieve this end is my firm conviction.'

Though this communication was drafted without reference to me I am in entire agreement with its terms and seeing that General Dickson has great experience of this country and is known and trusted by large numbers of Persians I venture to submit that his views are worthy of serious consideration.¹

¹ In the course of a lengthy minute, dated Aug. 9, Mr. Oliphant commented: 'Sir P. Cox points out that such views by General Dickson show a complete *volte-face* on the part of that officer. . . . Sir P. Cox assures me that the feeling of the provinces was not anti-Vossugh; that our Consuls reported the good impression created by the Anglo-Persian Agreement and that it was only a minority in some of the provinces, e.g. Shiraz, who raised their voice against it; these men are now supporters of the present Government and in the eyes of General Dickson have become the "majority". . . .'

No. 535

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [Confidential/General/363/19]

Private and personal

TEHRAN, August 6, 1920, 5.30 p.m.

For your private guidance.

I think you ought to know that length and frequency of your telegrams are a source of unfavourable comment in Cabinet, and that daily variations at Tehran, thus reported, render it almost impossible for H.M. Government either to form a coherent view of Persian situation, or, in the midst of world-wide anxieties, to measure the amount of attention due to it.

You would much facilitate our task by observing greater proportion and conciseness in your messages which exceed in dimensions those received from any half a dozen storm-centres in the world.

No. 536

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 411 Telegraphic [C 3119/56/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 7, 1920, 2.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 558 (of 4th August).¹

Orders are being sent by War Office not to withdraw the 2 battalions on Persian line,² unless situation at Baghdad is so critical as to render their return to Mesopotamia absolutely indispensable.³

¹ Not printed.

² See No. 530.

³ An insurrectionary movement had broken out in the Middle Euphrates region in July 1920 and several British garrisons were cut off.

No. 537

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 10, 9.15 a.m.)

No. 564 Telegraphic [C 3498/82/34]

TEHRAN, August 8, 1920, 9 a.m.¹

I venture to ask whether your Lordship's telegram No. 401² was drafted after my telegram No. 523³ had been considered. If not I would beg leave to suspend action on former in case arguments contained in latter may induce His Majesty's Government to modify terms of communication which I am instructed to make to Persian Prime Minister.

Even if having considered my telegram His Majesty's Government maintain their present attitude towards Persian Cabinet I would submit that it would be unwise for me to take a step which would result in their resignation at a moment when they are actively engaged in organising an expedition against Bolsheviks and rebels in Gilan.

A change of Government just at present would certainly delay preparations for campaign, encourage enemy, wreck all chance of an agreement with Kuchik Khan (see my telegram No. 561),⁴ and with democrats of Tabriz with whom negotiations are proceeding satisfactorily and very likely cause disturbances in Capital and elsewhere.

Before upsetting present Government I should moreover be grateful for instructions regarding kind of Cabinet which His Majesty's Government would wish to see established in their place and to learn whether in the event of access to power of one prepared at once to impose Anglo-Persian Agreement on country without awaiting Parliamentary sanction they are willing to afford support necessary to make this possible (see my telegram above referred to).

¹ This telegram was drafted on Aug. 7.

² No. 531.

³ Nos. 522-4.

⁴ The reference is to a Tehran telegram of this number, of Aug. 6, which was received in the Foreign Office as 'No. 279 (*sic*)', not printed.

Shah fully realises his absolute dependence on Great Britain and is so anxious to please us that he would be willing to (? summon) at a moment's notice any statesman whom I might name. In the meantime I venture to comment on some of the points raised in your telegram which I will take in their order.

1. It is a mistake to suppose that agreement was in effective operation under late Government for it was in fact more completely in suspense in their time than it is at present.

They paid it indeed outward homage but though they allowed members of Financial Commission to work in various departments of⁵ all the recommendations of Financial Adviser they put none of latter in force nor removed one single thief from public service, which nevertheless was more corrupt under them than ever before even in history of Persia.

In spite of repeated representations of Sir P. Cox and later of myself and of frequent promises on their part they took no steps to examine report of joint Military Commission the acceptance of which by Cabinet is an indispensable preliminary to reorganisation of Persian Army. That work could not therefore be effectively proceeded with and while late Prime Minister complained to General Dickson that his Government dared not allow Commission to proceed with its task without consent of Medjliss he steadfastly refused to summon that assembly when I pressed him to do so on pretext that moment was inopportune.

2. Prominent persons referred to in paragraph 2 of your telegram were never hostile to Great Britain before her alliance with Russia, and though I have no wish to defend their conduct in turning to Germany during the war it is notorious that it was only because they thought . . .⁶ that they sought help against their great enemy in only quarter in which they could find it. They now realise that their interest once more lies in co-operation with us and are pledged to support agreement.

I venture to think that it would have been a fatal error on our part to refuse (? instant) help of which we (*sic*)⁷ have urgent need and to persist in policy of proscription and vengeance which late Prime Minister pursued towards them. Colonel Starosselski's commanding position is independent of attitude of Persian Government towards Great Britain and late Cabinet could have no more dismissed him than can this one nor had they any real intention of doing so. His ascendancy is due to fact that Persian Government cannot afford to get rid of officers of only force at their disposal which is even relatively well disciplined and which forms their sole defence against their internal enemies.

This situation arises from position which orders of War Office oblige Norperforce to adopt. Had British troops remained at Enzeli and Resht or even were they now allowed to advance and re-occupy those places which they could probably do with their present strength and certainly with

⁵ The text as sent read: 'departments and accepted all'.

⁶ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'themselves abandoned by us'.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'to refuse their help of which we have'.

addition of another brigade, Persian Government, who distrust Russian officers and only employ Cossack division with utmost reluctance would cease to lean on latter. If our troops are forbidden to co-operate effectively with Cossacks in forthcoming operations position of Colonel Starosselsky will be still further improved at our expense.

4. Humiliation of our position to which your Lordship refers is entirely due to attitude which we have assumed in this respect. Persians cannot understand why our troops remain here doing nothing.

Our position with regard to agreement is not one of humiliation. We are considered by all but Extremists and interested persons to have taken only just and sensible line and only three days ago two Persians bitterly opposed to present Government on personal grounds remarked to me quite independently of each other that where we had one friend a month ago we have a hundred now. That does not however mean that these new friends will support agreement till it has received Parliamentary sanction.

5. Financial Adviser and General Dic[k]son are both constantly consulted by Government who have put in force some of most important of reforms recommended by former (see my telegram No. 543)⁸ and would have put more had they been less occupied with military questions. The reference to my telegram No. 510 in this connection appears to be a mistake.⁹ Their attitude on question of loan is in my opinion pedantic but it is quite logical. They consider since they regard operation of agreement as suspended they have no right to a sum which comes to them under its terms.

7. As regards constant appeals of Persian Government for money for defence of country [I] suggested in my telegram No. 475¹⁰ a means by which their very urgent need might be satisfied without offending their scruples respecting use of loan or imposing any additional expense on His Majesty's Government. Though I have more than once begged for an early decision on this point I am still without a reply for which I should be most grateful.

8. Persian Government have never asked me for a subsidy for Shah and are quite indifferent whether it is paid or not (see my telegram No. 453).¹¹

Request has on each occasion proceeded from His Majesty himself.

9. Persian Government have never asked me for money for propaganda (see my telegram No. 559).¹²

10. As regards their request for payment of Cossack Division this was one of the conditions on which Prime Minister originally consented to take office and His Majesty's Government though they very naturally refused to find sum themselves sanctioned arrangement which I have made to obtain it.¹³

11. Persian Government have in fact taken steps to expedite election and summon Medjliss (see my telegram No. 543).⁸

⁸ Of July 29, not printed. In this Mr. Norman had reported that the Persian Government had decided to hold the remaining elections at once without official interference and to hold a plebiscite 'in each of the constituencies where members have already been chosen, the electors being asked to say whether they are content with their representatives or not'.

⁹ See No. 516, n. 1.

¹⁰ No. 506.

¹¹ No. 499.

¹² Of Aug. 5, not printed.

¹³ See Nos. 499 and 506, n. 5.

12. Persian Government cannot justly be accused of deriving all possible benefits from agreement when they decline to touch loan which is one of its chief advantages nor can I logically reproach them with both these faults at same time.

13. His Majesty's Government cannot of course permit agreement to be mutilated in its passage through Medjliss but Government assert that there is no prospect of this. I have only heard of two annulments as probable *viz*: the introduction of a time limit to which I see no objection and suppression of article 1 as being disagreeably reminiscent of detested Anglo-Russian Agreement and derogatory to dignity of an independent country which appears to me to be rather an advantage. Persian Government certainly realise consequences which must follow rejection of agreement, a contingency which however they do not contemplate.

14. I doubt whether His Majesty's Government have right to withdraw members of Financial Commission. They have contracts with Persian Government who pay them and whose servants they are.

Members of Military Commission are in a different position. Indeed two have already left for Mesopotamia expressing intention of returning as soon as agreement has passed Medjliss.

15. Present Prime Minister clearly laid down conditions upon which he was willing to take office and to these His Majesty's Government raised no objection (see my [your] telegram No. 352).¹⁴ Since then, though Persian Government have taken full advantage of latitude thus allowed them they have not failed to fulfil their undertakings.

I therefore hesitate to charge them with a breach of faith.

There are only two ways of putting agreement into operation, one is that indicated by present Government which obviously involves delay and other disadvantages, but which will secure its acceptance by public opinion which I believe to be overwhelmingly in favour of an undertaking with Great Britain if accepted by Medjliss. Other is its imposition on a reluctant country by a reactionary Government in which we must be prepared to co-operate by force.

¹⁴ No. 497.

No. 538

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 9, 10.20 p.m.)

No. 565 Telegraphic [C 3459/82/34]

TEHRAN, August 9, 1920, 9.40 a.m.¹

Your telegram No. 407.²

I have not had opportunity of reading debate referred to but can confidently affirm that if His Majesty's Government wish to meet views of House of Commons by reducing our commitments in Persia, while at the same time serving our interests, the way to do so is to support present Cabinet.

¹ This telegram was drafted on Aug. 7.

² No. 533.

When once Persia is delivered from external dangers which threaten her (and till this is done no Cabinet whatever its attitude to Anglo-Persian Agreement can seriously settle down to work of internal reform) and when once agreement has passed Medjliss, I see no reason why British troops should not be gradually reduced in numbers and eventually altogether withdrawn. On the other hand if a Government comes into power who attempt to put agreement into force at once, not only will it be impossible consistently with safety to withdraw troops but it will be necessary largely to reinforce them.

Without any pretension to familiarity with temper of House of Commons I cannot but believe it would prefer to assist with relatively few troops and for a short time a Government seeking to accomplish their objects and our own by constitutional means, than to support with a larger number and for an indefinite period an attempt to force agreement on an unwilling country.

Present Government are not acting disloyally. They were allowed by His Majesty's Government four months to get agreement accepted by Medjliss and are setting about their task in way which they think best and which in present conditions is the only practical one. They are perhaps not working quickly but it is not in the nature of Persian Governments to do this and it must be remembered in extenuation of their slow progress that they are much hampered by necessity of having first to provide organisation of military expeditions for which they have no money to pay and by absence of all Cabinet records and of many of most important papers from various Ministries which have been removed or destroyed by their predecessors.

They stipulated on taking office that execution of agreement shall be considered to be in abeyance till parliamentary sanction is obtained for it and His Majesty's Government acquiesced in this condition.³ They are not however vacillating or doing nothing in the interval for they are taking measures to suppress rebellion, reconcile Azerbaijan, and combat internal Bolshevism, proceeding with elections, and are introducing important reforms into administration which late Government never attempted.

They are asking, it is true, for money to organise defence as did late Government through Sir P. Cox as much as three months ago⁴ but their demand can be met without additional expense to His Majesty's Government by adopting expedient suggested in my telegram No. 475.⁵ If loan depleted by this expedient eventually proves insufficient, as it probably will, for the purpose for which it was originally intended and His Majesty's Government cannot see their way to supplement it, I have reason to know that it can at any moment be far more than made up from private British sources.

Shah will dismiss Cabinet at our bidding at any moment but he can never persuade it to retain office by sacrifice of the principles which are the reasons of its existence and maintenance of which alone enable it to be useful to us.

Unless His Majesty's Government are prepared to use force they are not in a position to dictate to Persia. Co-operation with a constitutional administration is therefore the only course open to them unless they prefer to

³ See Nos. 492 and 497.

⁴ See Nos. 425 and 436.

⁵ No. 506.

retire, cut their losses, . . .⁶ all prospect of ever regaining their position, and abandon the country to its fate.

I venture accordingly once more to appeal to them to banish their suspicions of present Persian Government and lend them ungrudging support of which they feel the need more acutely every day. They know I am doing my best for them and show their gratitude by consulting me on every point which arises and by almost always following my advice, but they cannot but feel discouraged by knowledge that they have not the full confidence of His Majesty's Government which they are doing their best to deserve.

If I were authorised to deliver to Prime Minister a message expressing sympathy with Government in difficulties with which they have to contend and offering them a word of encouragement in their work and of appreciation of their efforts, their task and mine would be greatly facilitated while if an opportunity could be taken to make some statement of a similar character in Parliament and have it telegraphed here by Reuter, favourable effect in this country would I am convinced be marked and instantaneous. Persians would feel that Great Britain is after all disinterested friend of their country and supporter of constitution, which it owes in first instance to her, a debt never entirely forgotten by enlightened elements here though recent events have greatly obscured the memory of it.

Might not such a statement also tend to diminish the difficulties which confront His Majesty's Government in their endeavours to reconcile Parliament to necessity for continuing to extend some help to Persia if our interests are to be preserved?

Reference to your telegram No. 401⁷ appears to be mistake.
Sent to India, copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

⁶ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'sacrifice'.

⁷ See No. 533, n. 3.

No. 539

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 12, 9.10 p.m.)

No. 571 Telegraphic [C 3722/82/34]

TEHRAN, August 11, 1920, 2 p.m.

My telegram 562.¹

Financial Adviser earnestly begs me at once to forward to Your Lordship the following expression of his views.

(Begins.)

To my remarks which you cabled to London in your telegram No. 511² I should like to add following.

I adhere to my fifth reason but I am happy to say that I have found a formula satisfying both scruples of Persian Government and my own.³

¹ No. 534.

² i.e. No. 516.

³ The text as sent from Tehran read: 'my own self-respect'.

I have proposed to them that they should send me to London as Plenipotentiary to settle all outstanding differences with Anglo-Persian Oil Company. They have accepted, and I shall leave so soon as transport and my health permit.⁴ This is only way out of impasse created by 'cold storage' system other than resignation, and I prefer it for following reasons:—

1. Results of my mission will I hope render Persia independent of British subsidies for some months.

2. I am convinced that if financial reform is to succeed, advisory functions are useless and that real power of control can only be given by Mejlis. Both convictions are shared by best Ministers and Officials with whom I have discussed the position. Unless and until such powers are given by Mejlis it is better on every ground that I should be occupied in London in doing an important service to Persian Government than remain here in a false position.

3. From repeated conversations with Prime Minister I am convinced of his sincerity and his friendliness to His Majesty's Government and agreement. He has in fact already put in force one of the most important of my . . .⁵ though I cannot of course predict entire success for it without aid of British Officials. Late Government, though formally approving all my proposals, had achieved no (? real)⁶ results when they fell because they dared not dismiss thieves, mostly their own adherents, who conspired to block reforms.

4. Prime Minister whose character is beyond reproach has on his side such moral forces as exist in this country. An honest Government treating on constitutional methods deserves at least as much consideration as a corrupt Government relying on bribery and violence.

5. The alternative to present Government would be a corrupt reactionary Government which I refuse to serve, or an extreme anti-British Government. Either would last a few weeks only and be followed by revolution and anarchy in which many European lives would be lost and British influence and all hope of financial reform would perish.

6. The constitutional scruples of present Government may appear excessive, but they are inevitable consequence of methods employed by late Government here to negotiate agreement and stifle criticism of it, viz. secrecy, bribery, and violence. These methods are responsible for half our present troubles. If agreement can be saved present Government alone can save it and they are trying to do so their own way.

7. Minister of Finance is being removed in accordance with promise given

⁴ In his telegram No. 427 of Aug. 14 (not printed) Lord Curzon replied that in view of the situation possibly arising from No. 540 below it appeared to him 'eminently desirable that Financial Adviser should be on the spot until it is definitely seen whether by end of October Agreement is to be approved or rejected by Mejliss'. In Tehran telegram No. 582 of Aug. 19 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported that the Financial Adviser had had a series of attacks of intermittent fever and neuralgia and that two doctors were of opinion 'that he cannot recover his health and become fit for work here till he has had a complete rest in a different climate'.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'reforms'.

⁶ The text as sent read: 'actual'.

by Prime Minister when he took office. I am on most friendly terms with him and he means well but he is incapable and talkative.

The other half of our troubles is due to recent military events and it is necessary to emphasise their grave results financial as well as political. The immediate results are loss for the moment of all our richest provinces though there is hope that these will soon be restored, and extraordinary military expenditure, which will make financial problem twice as difficult as it was on my arrival. Ultimate results are far more serious and permanent.

When His Majesty's Government immobilised their troops before Bolshevik attack and retreated from Enzeli they made Starosselsky master of North Persia.

He alone commanded troops capable of taking the field (for gendarmes are worthless), he cleared Mazanderan, and if he does not go over to enemy he can pose as saviour of Persia: dictatorship exercised by a Russian who regards destruction of work of British Military Mission as only alternative to his own expulsion is not consistent with exercise by His Majesty's Government of a predominant influence in Persia, and as work of Military Commission and that of financial adviser are interdependent, I hope steps may be taken either to come to a frank and friendly understanding with Starosselsky or to maintain at hand sufficient British military force to counterbalance him until military reforms shall have shown some real result.

Ends.

I shall be obliged to report later on question of Russian Officer of Cossack Division as modified by recent events.

Repeated to India.

No. 540

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 422 Telegraphic [C 3459/82/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 13, 1920, 10 p.m.*

His Majesty's Government have given full consideration to your telegrams Nos. 564 and 565 of 7th August,¹ and they appreciate the ability and sincerity with which you have explained position and given your views. We have no desire to upset present Persian Government or to instal another in its place. On the contrary, when we accepted it, upon your advice, we meant to give fair chance to new orientation of policy which was thereby involved. All that we desire is that Mushir-ed-Dowleh's Government should, with least possible delay, fulfil its obligations, put Anglo-Persian Agreement, with consent of Medjliss, into effective operation, and thus enable reduction of British forces in Persia at no distant date, or alternatively, by rejection of agreement, show that Persia does not want our assistance, and so release His Majesty's Government from all responsibility and justify complete withdrawal.

¹ Nos. 537 and 538.

It is of no use, therefore, to revive bygone history or to dilate upon virtues or vices of Vossugh's administration. We have to deal with existing facts.

The situation must be viewed in its political and in its military aspect, and we recognise that the former depends largely upon the latter. We are willing to give Persian Government an opportunity of adhering to its undertaking. We never accepted position that agreement should be in abeyance for four months. What we did was to promise continuance of monthly subsidy of 350,000 tomans for four months, on condition that Medjliss was summoned and its agreement sought within that time. This period will elapse at end of October, and we think it most desirable that elections should be completed and that Parliament should take its decision, if possible, at an earlier date.

Such a proceeding would be an earnest to us of honest intentions of Persian Government, and would render vindication of our policy in British House of Commons, where much suspicion is entertained and which will meet again in middle of October, less difficult.

We are favourably impressed by energetic efforts of Persian Government to re-establish military position in North Persia, and congratulate them upon success which has so far attended their exertions.

His Majesty's Government are prepared to leave existing British forces at Kasvin and on Hamadan line for the present, and, should necessity arise, even to reinforce them.

General Champain has, I believe, already received authority to reoccupy Menjil,² and I will endeavour to secure assent of military authorities to their co-operation with Persian Government in stabilising position in North Persia.

If and when the agreement is accepted by Medjliss, British Military Mission should at once resume its labours, with hearty co-operation of Persian Government, and retention of British garrison for a limited period should enable a Persian national force to come into being without undue delay. We shall then have to settle with Starosselski on lines indicated in your telegram No. 571 of 11th August.³

As regards financial situation, proposals made in your telegram No. 475 of 9th July⁴ have been carefully considered. We are not clear as to advance from private sources, which we could not accept if it involved any sort of guarantee. On the other hand, His Majesty's Government are willing to authorise a reasonable advance from loan for purposes of national security, on clear understanding that it will be deducted from balance of loan to be paid later on, and we await your advice and that of Financial Adviser on these points.

It is not without much difficulty that I have obtained consent of Cabinet to these proposals, and in communicating them to Persian Government you should make clear how much their execution can be facilitated by action of latter. Our policy remains unchanged, but our adherence to it is in Persia's hands much more than in our own. With regard to suggested modifications

² G.O.C. Mesopotamia reported his concurrence in this proposal in his telegram No. X 9728 of Aug. 8 to the War Office, not printed.

³ No. 539.

⁴ No. 506.

of agreement when it comes before Medjliss (*vide* your telegram No. 564), we shall be quite willing to meet views of Persian Government. A time limit is a very fitting subject-matter for consideration. Article 1 was only introduced to meet the earnest wishes of then Persian Government, and its language was even strengthened by me in deference to their desires.

Repeated to India.

No. 541

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 21, 3.10 p.m.)

No. 581 Telegraphic [C 4481/1234/34]

TEHRAN, August 18, 1920, 9 a.m.

Your telegram No. 406.¹

I have received following information from an absolutely sure source.

American capitalists express willingness to accept Khostaria concession² on favourable terms and also as a result of steps taken by Nosret-ed-Dowleh to take up in the meantime one for mining in Azerbaijan which had previously been assigned to one of His Highness' brothers. They have been disappointed in both cases.

On July 29th Secretary of State of United States asked Persian Minister, Washington, whether Persian Government did not require American help and stated if they did he would be glad to obtain the two concessions in question. Persian Minister having reported this conversation to his Government was told in reply that negotiations about concessions and such matters must be deferred until opening of Medjliss which would shortly take place.

Minister at the same time reported rumours emanating from British source were current at Teheran that United States were offering a loan to Persia.³ He asked whether this was true and was informed by present Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs that story was unfounded and that he should refute it.

¹ Of Aug. 4, not printed.

² See Nos. 404 and 406. Cf. *F.R.U.S. 1920*, vol. iii, pp. 352-4.

³ Cf. No. 526.

No. 542

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 435 Telegraphic [C 4542/910/34]

Most secret

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 21, 1920, 4 p.m.

Most reliable informant assures me that Persian Minister in Washington has informed State Department that Persian Government would like to see American rather than other nationalities acquiring oil concessions in the North of Persia.¹ Should efforts be made by American Companies he trusted

¹ See *F.R.U.S. 1920*, vol. iii, pp. 352-4.

that such concessions might be given to them. My informant added that your American colleague was to intimate the above to the Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs and report on the possibilities of the situation.

This doubtless refers among other things to Khostaria concession.

No. 543

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 27, 9.10 a.m.)

No. 592 Telegraphic [C 4937/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, August 26, 1920, 5.30 p.m.¹

My telegram No. 589.²

In the course of their advance on Resht the Cossack Division captured papers of enemy staff which afforded conclusive proof that Bolshevik invasion of Persia was deliberately planned by Soviet Government of Azerbaijan who are thus making war on this country both by land and sea.

Commander of Division has accordingly telegraphed from Resht to Persian Government asking them to inform Government of Azerbaijan that, unless these operations are at once discontinued, the district of Mughan, North of Ardebil will be occupied as a measure of retaliation.

Colonel Starosselsky has solicited my support in inducing Persian Government to take this step and I have given it.³

I have done this partly because reports current here, that Soviet Government of Azerbaijan are in great difficulties and about to leave Baku even if as some say they have not already left, though unconfirmed, are too persistent to be unfounded,⁴ so that moment seems favourable for presenting to them an Ultimatum, which may not only frighten them into keeping their hands off Persia but perhaps also hasten their fall to the great advantage to all surrounding countries and to the embarrassment of Russian Soviet Government.

It should be observed that, apart from invasion of Gilan, Persia is at present threatened with an attack in North West which might prove even much more serious, following on occupation by Bolsheviks with consent of Armenian Government, of Nakhichevan, Zan . . . vet⁵ and Karabagh (see telegram No. 355 from High Commissioner in Trans-caucasus),⁶ and indeed I have already received reports to the effect that Bolshevik troops in that region are

¹ This telegram was drafted on Aug. 25.

² Of Aug. 23, despatched on the 24th, not printed.

³ In Foreign Office telegram No. 443 of Aug. 30 (not printed) Mr. Norman was advised that such retaliation would be 'unnecessarily provocative. You should not encourage Persian Government to become involved in an attack on republic of Azerbaijan.'

⁴ In Tiflis telegram No. 366 of Aug. 17 (not printed) Commander Luke had informed Lord Curzon that there was no indication 'that Soviet of Azerbaijan is breaking away from its absolute dependence on Russia'.

⁵ The text is here uncertain. 'Zangezur' was suggested in the Foreign Office and is the wording in the text as sent.

⁶ Vol. XII, No. 599.

receiving reinforcements from 11th Bolshevik Army presumably as the result of . . .⁷ arrangement.

At the same time fact that almost all Caucasus prisoners taken by Persian Cossacks in their advance belong to same army and that gunboats are at this moment bombarding Enzeli to prevent Cossacks from entering town, seems to prove conclusively that Russian Soviet Government, in spite of their repeated denials, are supporting, or at least acquiescing in attack on Persia, for army in question, though apparently recruited in Caucasus, forms part of Russian Soviet forces to which ships must also originally have belonged.

His Majesty's Government are not as I understand in a position to put direct pressure on Government of Baku but they may, I hope, be able and willing to induce that of Moscow to oblige the latter (? to) withdraw naval and military forces in question from enterprise in which they are engaged.

I have asked to be supplied with translations of captured documents mentioned above, on the receipt of which I shall be in a position to furnish your Lordship with further details.

Sent to India No. 592, Constantinople for Tiflis 26, Bagdad, for G.O.C., 290. Copy to Kasvin.

⁷ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'the above'.

No. 544

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received August 30, 9 a.m.)

No. 600 Telegraphic [C 5030/56/34]

Clear the line. Very urgent

TEHRAN, August 29, 1920, 8 p.m.

In view of disaster to Starosselski's force before Enzeli¹ it is imperative that British troops in North Persia should prevent Bolsheviks moving south of Elburz along main road through Manjil and that British force should form screen behind which Persian troops can be reorganised and reinforced preparatory to fresh attempt to clear Gilan of enemy. Fate of Persia and of all British interests there depends upon North Persian Force doing this.

Character of enemy in face of whom Manjil was evacuated can be gauged by their precipitous flight before Cossacks when latter retreated from Resht while discomfiture of latter may be attributed to bad tactics and lack of training and discipline and opposition of a detachment of Russian regular troops.

Number of reinforcements of such troops which enemy have received is not definitely known at present. According to Interpreter of Italian Legation (see my immediately preceding telegram)² Baku is entirely dominated by Russian Bolsheviks who have turned town into a vast camp.

There can therefore no longer be any doubt that Russian Sovyet Government are really responsible for invasion of Persia but it is to be hoped that their grave embarrassments on other fronts will prevent them from despatching really large reinforcements to this country.

¹ The Persian Cossack force had been repulsed about eight miles from Enzeli on Aug. 25 and had subsequently evacuated Resht. ² Tehran No. 599 of Aug. 28, not printed.

It was reported in telegram³ yesterday that Delegates of Russian Sovyet Government have left London but if in spite of this His Majesty's Government still have any power to exercise their influence or put pressure on latter I trust they will do so at once without reckoning on a favourable development of situation here.

Repeated Civil Commissioner, Baghdad who will please transmit to General Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

³ The text as sent read: 'in Reuter's telegrams'.

No. 545

Earl Curzon to Sir A. Geddes (Washington)

No. 712 Telegraphic [C 4871/1234/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 30, 1920, 7 p.m.

Teheran telegram No. 581¹ and your telegram No. 560 (of July 28th).²

Following for your information as to position of Claims referred to.

There are two Khostaria concessions both of which Persian Government declare null and void as having been forcibly acquired by Russian Government. The first for oil has been purchased from Khostaria by Anglo-Persian Oil Company with our consent and under our promise of support.³ Anglo-Persian Oil Company also solicited our support in respect of the second for minerals in North Persia (Azerbaijan claim mentioned would cover part of this). We replied deprecating any action in present political circumstances and until attitude of new Persian Government became more clearly defined. We are informing Persian Government of our attitude as to both concessions and of our intention to support Company in their purchase which we believe to have been legally carried out.⁴

It would appear premature to say anything to United States Government at present.

¹ No. 541.

² No. 526.

³ See No. 404.

⁴ Cf. No. 546 below.

No. 546

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 444 Telegraphic [C 4871/1234/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 30, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your telegram No. 581.¹

We think it is time that Persian Government be informed categorically that we contest their view as to cancellation of Khostaria Concessions for oil and for minerals and that we intend to support the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in their purchase of the former which we believe to have been legally carried out.²

¹ No. 541.

² See Nos. 404 and 545.

Same Company are anxious to acquire from Khostaria rights over mineral Concession also. We have replied deprecating action in present circumstances and pending clearer definition of policy of present Persian Government but Company's interest should be borne in mind in combating Persian Government's view that they have free right to dispose of both concessions on grounds that Khostaria's acquired rights have become null and void.

We have twice recently informed Persian Legation that we contest their view and that we will revert to matter at a later date.

No. 547

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received September 5, 5 p.m.)

No. 610 Telegraphic [C 5568/56/34]

TEHRAN, September 3, 1920, 2 p.m.¹

My telegram No. 595.²

I have tried to persuade Persian Government to accept advance offered them without asking questions, and to refrain from insisting on a formal contract, and thanks to support of Financial Adviser have succeeded in inducing them to entrust to him task of trying to secure on his arrival in London conditions which they wish to see granted to them and in the meantime to use the money.

Financial Adviser has pointed out to them that they are more likely to obtain terms which they desire by adopting this procedure than by signing a contract here as a result of negotiation with His Majesty's Government carried on through this Legation.

Conditions for which they hope, and which Financial Adviser considers reasonable, are as follows:—

1. Amount, 2,000,000 tomans.
2. Rate of interest, 7%.
3. Security, excess of revenue of southern Customs over and above amount already pledged for service of earlier loans.
4. Time for repayment, 40 years.
5. If His Majesty's Government grant to Persian Government a further loan of greater amount, the amount of present loan shall be deducted therefrom on condition that period of repayment of latter shall not be less than 40 years.

As regards (1) amount asked for has been reduced because so far as Financial Adviser can foresee it would not be safe to burden surplus revenues of southern Customs with service of a larger loan. Persian Customs never-

¹ This telegram was drafted on Sept. 2.

² In this telegram of Aug. 27 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported that the Persian Government 'would be much obliged if His Majesty's Government could be substituted for Imperial Bank of Persia as creditor for 500,000 tomans already advanced by the latter which would have the effect of raising the advance now asked for to 2,500,000 tomans'.

theless propose to repay out of reduced amount the 500,000 tomans recently advanced to them by Imperial Bank of Persia to meet their military needs (see my telegram No. 475).³ Chief Manager of bank has no objection to this.

As regards (4) Financial Adviser does not think it fair to expect Persian Government, considering their present financial position, to repay loan in a shorter time.

As regards (5) I pointed out that unless Persian Government accept some such condition, I shall be unable to defend His Majesty's Government against a charge of bad faith if Medjliss ask why, whereas a loan of £2,000,000 is promised by Anglo-Persian agreement, sum actually forthcoming has been diminished by amount of present loan. (I should add that there is in any case likely to be trouble when Medjliss find out that a substantial part of £2,000,000 has been paid to late Government for purposes of corruption, a fact which it will be impossible to conceal.)

(? 5) was couched in general terms to spare susceptibilities of Government who shrink from mere mention of a loan resulting from an agreement which has not yet passed Medjliss.

It will be observed that this condition logically involves a request, to be preferred when Medjliss meets, for modification of agreement by substitution of 40 for 20 years as period of repayment of loan of £2,000,000.

Financial Adviser, who is better, left yesterday for Bushire on his way to England.

Please postpone discussion till his arrival.

Repeated to India.

³ No. 506.

No. 548

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 456 Telegraphic [C 5568/56/34]**

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 10, 1920, 5.35 p.m.*

On receipt of your telegrams No. 593 of 26th August¹ and No. 595 of 27th August respectively,² I approached Treasury in sense therein indicated. Your telegram No. 610 of 3rd September, since received,³ puts a somewhat different complexion on the matter.

I am prepared to await arrival of financial adviser, as suggested by you, before dealing with whole matter. In the meanwhile, I would point out that latest proposal of Persian Government is not in accordance with conditions laid down in my telegram No. 422 of 13th August,⁴ and you should explain,

¹ Not printed. In this Mr. Norman reported that the 500,000 tomans advanced by the Imperial Bank of Persia to finance the expedition to Gilan were nearly all used up, and that a proposal was now made that the Persian Government should draw as they required up to a further 2,000,000 tomans, subject to control of the expenditure by a committee.

² See No. 547, n. 2.

³ No. 547.

⁴ No. 540.

in whatever way you consider best, that Persian Government must clearly understand that His Majesty's Government cannot entertain idea of any new loan, in view of the fact that Persian Government, while shrinking from mention of a loan resulting from the 1919 Agreement, which has not passed Mejliss, are pressing upon us a new agreement for a new loan prior to the meeting of that body. Unless, therefore, Persian Government can await discussion with Treasury after arrival of financial adviser in this country, they must realise that advance of 2,000,000 tomans can only be entertained and pressed on Treasury on explicit understanding that it be repayable out of the loan based on 1919 Agreement, and that His Majesty's Government will not agree to the repayment or conversion of any loan negotiated by Persian Government from other sources in the interval except on similar conditions.⁵

⁵ In reply to a request for elucidation in Mr. Norman's telegram No. 626 of Sept. 12 (not printed) Lord Curzon in his telegram No. 465 of Sept. 13 (not printed) explained that the last sentence of the foregoing telegram 'was drafted because Persian Government recently borrowed 500,000 tomans from the Imperial Bank of Persia', and 'in your telegram No. 532 of 27th July [not printed] you allude to the possibility of borrowing elsewhere. It appears most desirable to avoid recurrence of such possibilities.' In his telegram No. 637 of Sept. 17 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported that he had read Lord Curzon's No. 456 to the Persian Prime Minister and had explained that His Majesty's Government insisted on specific mention of £2,000,000 in connection with proposed advance of 2,000,000 tomans.

No. 549

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received September 12, 9.30 a.m.)

No. 625 Telegraphic [C 6150/56/34]

Clear the line

TEHRAN, September 11, 1920, 4.30 p.m.

General Officer Commanding in Mesopotamia's telegram ordering immediate despatch of Guides Cavalry and Chestnut Batteries to Mesopotamia¹ coinciding as it does with a communiqué from Norperforce to the effect that Persian Cossacks are in touch with enemy ten miles north of Imamzadeh Hashem and that situation is obscure gives me grave cause for alarm.

Political effect here of withdrawal of British troops at this juncture will be absolutely disastrous. I experienced considerable difficulty in calming fears of the Shah and Persian Government on occasion of withdrawal of Royal Irish Fusiliers and political officer at Kasvin informs me that ever since unfortunate retreat of British troops from Manjil² feeling of apprehension and distrust which we have been combating here has been even more pronounced at that place. Our enemies have been making capital out of our retirement from Manjil and also out of inability of General Champain to move beyond (? that) place and have been doing their utmost to create impression that we are (? us)ing Bolsheviks to destroy Persia³ after which we shall expel former

¹ This telegram has not been traced in Foreign Office archives.

² On July 30. See Nos. 528, 529, and 532.

³ The text as sent read: 'using Bolsheviks to destroy Persian troops'.

and seize country for ourselves. It is even widely said that we are financing and working in collusion with invaders with the above object. Withdrawal of troops . . .⁴ will appear to (? justify) these wild accusations and it is not too much to say that even without any further advance on the part of Bolsheviks serious disorders are likely to break out in the (? capital).

Number of troops withdrawn will be greatly exaggerated and it may be anticipated that news of their departure will not only engender profoundest suspicion in minds of Persian populace and Government Forces at the front but will encourage enemy to undertake new offensive against latter now diminished, disorganised and discouraged by their recent reverse, especially since General Champain thinking it impossible to maintain his weakened force at Kasvin may withdraw it to Hamadan leaving way completely open to invaders.

In these circumstances it will be impossible to restrain the Shah and Government from evacuating capital in anticipation of an invasion. Complete anarchy will ensue and all confidence in us will be irretrievably lost.

From recent communiqués on Mesopotamian situation it does not appear that presence of one more regiment of cavalry and one more battery of artillery is essential and I cannot believe that either War Office or General Officer Commanding Mesopotamia would insist on their withdrawal if they realised the vital importance of their retention here.

I beg, therefore, that you will do everything in your power to bring about reversal of this order.

Repeated to Bagdad, No. 298, for General Officer Commanding. Sent to India.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'at this juncture'.

No. 550

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 462 Telegraphic [C 6040/267/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 13, 1920, 2.30 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 617 and 618 of 8th September.¹ Cossack division.

Question of Cossack division cannot obviously be settled definitely at present. Original idea, when uniform force for whole of Persia was conceived, was incorporation in it of division in similar manner to incorporation of South Persia Rifles; but, in view of Persian Government's present attitude, I am not sanguine that any such force will come into being. In the meanwhile, pending convocation of Medjliss, it is impossible to give Colonel Starosselsky any assurance regarding eventual future of force; but so long as he and his men operate loyally with British forces it would appear that no useful purpose would be served by attempt to disband them.

Propaganda agents mentioned in your telegram No. 618 ought surely to

¹ Not printed. In these Mr. Norman reported an interview on Sept. 8 with Col. Starosselsky.

be dealt with by the Persian anti-Bolshevik propaganda organisation of which you have previously made mention.

With regard to Colonel Starosselsky's contentions, you should, I think, point out to Shah and Prime Minister that any minatory language by the head of the Cossack division is not likely to prejudice His Majesty's Government in favour of the Colonel's claims.² If, as has been contended more than once, the primary rôle of the division is that of bodyguard of the Shah, it must be apparent to His Majesty that any hostility on part of Cossacks to British forces, who are fighting in the joint interests of Persia and Great Britain, must inevitably be opposed to Persian interests. His Majesty might explain matter to Starosselsky and point out that main object at present is to secure defeat of Bolshevik forces; that thereafter it remains to be seen whether uniform force will materialise, and that in any case until then it is the duty of Starosselsky to act whole-heartedly in defence of common interests.

Persian Government cannot expect active assistance from us in defence of their capital if they give countenance or support to any disintegrating action by Russian commander. If such attitude were adopted it would of course be open to His Majesty's Government to withdraw their forces to those parts of Persia where purely British or Mesopotamian interests predominate.³

² In his telegram No. 618 Mr. Norman had reported Col. Starosselsky as having affirmed that his force 'was now defending British interests in Persia, with the knowledge that, as soon as danger of Bolshevik invasion was over, we intended to destroy it' as an independent organisation. 'This knowledge, he said, made officers reluctant to fight, while in minds of men Bolshevism . . . simply meant opposition to England and was consequently popular . . . it would greatly facilitate his task of co-operation with us if he were able to give the division some assurance that its destruction was not intended . . . Colonel S . . . stated that plans for dealing with division discussed last year by His Majesty's Government with late Persian Government had been divulged to him. He said that he had prepared resistance by force, and that one of the measures which he had intended to take was to interrupt our communications with Mesopotamia.'

³ In his telegram No. 640 (not printed) of Sept. 18 Mr. Norman reported having informed the Persian Prime Minister of the substance of Lord Curzon's foregoing telegram except the last paragraph. He had also given him 'confidentially specimens of the very frank language used to me' by Col. Starosselsky and said that the Prime Minister appeared 'considerably impressed' by his account of Col. Starosselsky's attitude, 'of which he was previously unaware, since that officer is naturally not in the habit of expressing himself so freely in the presence of Persians'.

No. 551

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 466 Telegraphic [C 6150/56/34]

Very urgent. Clear the line FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 15, 1920, 3.45 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 625 (of September 11).¹

General Officer Commanding Mesopotamia has been instructed to avoid making any reduction in units composing Norperforce and in the event of his feeling it imperative to advise withdrawal of entire force in order to save situation in Mesopotamia, he is to take no steps in that direction without previous authority of Cabinet.

¹ No. 549.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received September 16, 10.15 p.m.)
No. 631 Telegraphic [C 6531/82/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *September 16, 1920, 7.30 a.m.*¹

Your telegram No. 455.²

Necessity for organising an expedition to repel Bolshevik invasion and their financial embarrassments, especially in that connection, have prevented Persian Government from paying as much attention as they ought to questions of elections even though I have allowed very few of my frequent meetings with Prime Minister to pass without urging necessity for opening Medjliss without delay.

At my instance it was early decided that in order to save time necessary voting papers etc. should wherever possible be printed locally instead of being sent from Capital, that all instructions to local authorities should be given by telegraph, and that they should be told that all elections must be completed by a certain date.

Though I had been repeatedly assured that these arrangements had been carried out I lately decided to ascertain for myself what progress has been actually made with elections in those places where they have not yet taken place, so I on September 4th called for reports on the subject from His Majesty's Consuls concerned.

I yesterday³ confronted Prime Minister with such of their replies as I have received which are far from satisfactory.

Prime Minister expressed greatest surprise and concern and said he would at once ask how it was that Minister of Interior, who had been told more than a month ago to give necessary instructions, had failed to do so. For last week or two he knew question had been attended to because he had himself interested himself directly in it (? by) personally sending telegrams embodying my proposals. He promised at once to expedite procedure and to call for periodical reports on progress made and begged me to do the same so that each of us might be able to check information received by the other.

I shall accordingly I hope be able in a few days to report earliest date on which Medjliss can meet.

This must I fear be delayed owing to fact that to-morrow is first day of Moharrem during (? earlier) part of which month little business can be transacted in this country.

I have touched in previous telegrams on another and perhaps chief cause of delay which has occurred, namely dissatisfaction felt in many quarters and according to Government expressed by (? numerous) protests at manner in which some of elections completed in time of late Cabinet were conducted.⁴

Present Government believe this feeling to be so strong and wide-spread as to be certain to give rise, if Deputies so chosen are allowed to take their seats, to cry that Medjliss is illegal and to demand for new elections.

¹ This telegram was drafted on Sept. 15.

² Of Sept. 10, not printed.

³ i.e. Sept. 14.

⁴ See, e.g., No. 492.

To avoid this, Government originally contemplated unconstitutional step of annulling all these elections, but I strongly deprecated this measure, which they soon abandoned, only to substitute for it however, equally illegal, if less drastic, plan of ascertaining views of electors in each of the constituencies concerned by means of a plebiscite.

They made their intention public about six weeks ago and affirm that since then they have received no complaints.

Deputies affected however assert (? great) dissatisfaction with previous announcement of this policy⁵ and that it has caused universal displeasure and a section of them declared their intention, if it was persisted in, of taking their seats irrespective of result of plebiscite and of upsetting Government, which they felt sure of being able to do.

I deprecated from the first recourse to plebiscite and urged Government to adhere strictly to provisions of constitution whereby Medjliss itself has to judge validity of elections.

For a long time my endeavours were unsuccessful, but at length, having undertaken at the request of a section of deputies already mentioned to mediate between them and Government, I appear to have convinced latter of strength of opposition which their policy has excited, for they have abandoned plan of plebiscite.

They are still, however, unwilling to let Medjliss meet before a total of 80 deputies are ready to take their seats because if it opens with bare quorum, for which only 69 are required, those elected under late Cabinet will be in a majority and will declare valid elections notoriously conducted under official pressure thus at once giving rise to popular demand for dissolution of Medjliss and for new elections, which must cause disastrous loss of time.

I trust it will be realised from foregoing report that task of expediting assemblage of Medjliss is not easy and that I may be acquitted of any negligence in the matter.

Number of deputies still required to produce bare quorum was only 8 a week ago.

⁵ The text as sent read: 'assert that there was no dissatisfaction previous to the announcement of this policy'.

No. 553

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 476 Telegraphic [C 6531/82/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 20, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 631 of 15th September about Persian elections¹ has been received by us with much disappointment, since it appears that little progress is being made, and that, even should Medjliss be convened within stipulated period, there are likely to be grave disputes as to validity of elections.

¹ No. 552.

We were unaware that you had from the first deprecated method of plebiscite, since you told us in your telegram No. 543 of 29th July that, although you regarded this procedure as illegal, you had raised no objection to it, because you had no desire to interfere with responsibility of Persian Government.² It is perhaps a pity that your objections were not more definitely expressed at the time.

Meanwhile the views and intentions of His Majesty's Government, as explained in my telegrams No. 401 of 31st July and No. 422 of 13th August,³ remain unaltered, and you will doubtless realise that long delays and hesitating procedure of Persian Government, if continued, point inevitably to a breakdown of the policy with which you have associated yourself and to a solution by which Persia will be the chief sufferer. I cannot help wondering whether Shah and Persian Government fully realise the direction in which their policy seems to be tending.

(Repeated to India.)

² See No. 537, n. 8.

³ Nos. 531 and 540.

No. 554

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received September 22)¹

No. 646 Telegraphic [C 6915/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, September 21, 1920, 12.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 637.²

Prime Minister told me to-day that Government could not consistently with their general attitude and policy consent to a specific mention of loan of £2,000,000 in connection with proposed advance.

He accordingly suggested that idea of an advance should be abandoned and that instead a part of the sum due to Persian Government by Anglo-Persian Oil Company, should be paid on account.

If (? His Majesty's Government could) neither sanction this nor accept formula devised by Financial Adviser regarding repayment of advance, Government would be obliged to resign after middle of Moharrem i.e. in about 10 days.

I asked Prime Minister in no case to act on this (? decision) till I had heard again from you and he consented, but I shall not be able to persuade him to abandon it altogether.

In the meantime Government are in desperate need of money. Gendarmerie have been unpaid for two months and even Cossacks at the front have not received all that is due to them.

Latter who are without shelter have been exposed to 9 days' continuous rain as a consequence of which half of them are reported to be sick and their Camp has twice been bombed by 3 aeroplanes which enemy have lately received.

¹ The time of receipt is not recorded.

² See No. 548, n. 5.

Commander of Division further states that three boats have reached Enzeli containing enemy re-inforcements chiefly Lesghians whose number however is not stated.

In the circumstances it is doubtful how long Cossacks can be counted on to remain where they are so that duty of protection of Capital may yet devolve exclusively on Norperforce.

Addressed to Foreign Office No. 646. Repeated to Bagdad 304. Sent to India.

No. 555

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received September 25, 10 p.m.)

No. 650 Telegraphic [C 7225/82/34]

TEHRAN, September 24, 1920, 12.50 p.m.

Your telegram No. 476.¹

Latest reports show that elections are being expedited and Prime Minister is hopeful of assembly of Medjliss within stipulated period.

Number of elections validity of which will be impugned is unlikely to exceed six, and as verification of mandates of all deputies must in any case be first duty of Medjliss, there is no reason why further delay should occur on this account especially as it appears certain that enough deputies will be present at opening of assembly to form quorum, even without those whose election may be declared illegal.

It is useless to expect Orientals to display same appreciation of value of time as Western Europeans often do, but Persian Government nevertheless now realise, I believe, that delay which has occurred has been excessive, though they excuse themselves on the ground that their time has been fully occupied in repelling external danger which still threatens the country and in coping with their financial difficulties.

They also allege that their efforts to expedite matters have to some extent been frustrated by apathy of population in many constituencies where it was in some cases at first impossible to induce people to serve on commissions which have to supervise elections. For example at Hamadan persons chosen for this purpose at once resigned in a body and it was difficult to find substitutes.

Provincial authorities have been also slack in carrying out their instructions, seeing that, (? as I) know, telegrams ordering them to expedite elections were sent at least six weeks ago.

As regards Plebiscite I could hardly have done more than I did.

It is true that when expedient was first mentioned to me I contented myself with observing that it was illegal; still as soon as it was announced as settled policy of Government, which was several weeks later, I at once deprecated it as likely to cause difficulties. If I did not do so more strongly it was because at first it gave rise to little public opposition and it therefore appeared that

¹ No. 553.

absolutely to insist on its abandonment would be superfluous and likely to cause further waste of time.

It is only during present month that hostility of deputies concerned has become marked and as soon as my meeting with some of them, which took place on September 7th, revealed their temper I exerted myself, happily with success, to get obnoxious decision reversed.

Sent to India.

No. 556

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received September 26, 6 p.m.)

No. 654 Telegraphic [C 7228/82/34]

TEHRAN, September 25, 1920, 12.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 476, latter part.¹

I regret that policy which I have been forced by circumstances to pursue here should have incurred disapproval of His Majesty's Government.

On my arrival I found in power a Government almost universally detested and entirely subservient to a Prime Minister to whom ill-health had left only energy required to increase his private fortune at the public expense. His policy had caused Azerbaijan practically to separate itself from Persia and had driven Mazandaran into rebellion. Gilan was in possession of Kuchik Khan and his followers who were allied with Bolsheviks. Capital was seething with Bolshevik intrigue and invitations to occupy it were being sent to Resht from many influential quarters. Had Bolsheviks responded in time their advance might well have been assisted by a rising here, and they would, failing an occupation of Tehran by British troops, have received welcome from a large section of population chiefly of lower class. Anglo-Persian agreement was nominally in force but in practice remained a dead letter and Government neither intended nor dared to summon Medjlis to ratify it because they feared its rejection by that assembly. Policy of His Majesty's Government and their intentions as expressed in agreement were widely distrusted, not so much on account of terms of that instrument itself, as of manner of its conclusion and personality of its Persian signatory whose unpopularity Great Britain shared.

Had I been able to keep late Government in office, which for reasons given at the time I could not have done, and had I exercised that power, I am convinced that a Bolshevik revolution would long since have broken out in capital, Azerbaijan become separate Soviet Republic, and Bolshevism spread from Gilan to Mazandaran as it was already beginning to do last June. Whole of Northern Persia with possible exception of Khorassan which was still garrisoned by British troops would then have fallen into power of Soviets.

On the other hand, had I put in office another Government of a similar type the same thing would have occurred after longer interval, while I could not then have induced extreme democrats to co-operate with us on any terms.

¹ No. 553.

I had therefore no choice but to install a Cabinet chiefly consisting of moderate nationalists who for reasons already explained would only consent to take office on conditions which, as I realised, must be in some respects distasteful to His Majesty's Government and I was moreover obliged, in default of any instructions from your Lordship, to act on my own responsibility in the matter in order to end an interregnum which had lasted more than a week and was becoming dangerous to the country.

I was well aware that new Cabinet did not at first possess confidence of His Majesty's Government and had I had any doubt on the point it would have been dispelled by your telegram No. 401,² but they were favoured by all the moderate elements in this country and I was convinced that British interests demanded that I should give them personally as much support as it was in my power to afford without any backing from home.

Your telegram No. 422,³ which appeared to me to indicate marked change in attitude assumed in your telegram No. 401, encouraged me to hope that I had pleaded cause of present Government with some success, but I see from your telegram under reply that this is not the case.

As however there is as yet in my opinion no combination which would enjoy the same support in the country as this one or have so good a chance of piloting agreement through Medjlis, I propose to do my best to keep them in power until they have had chance of fulfilling their promise in latter respect, and with this object to lose no opportunity of urging them to take a more reasonable view of those questions in which, as in that of loan, they appear bent on sacrificing practical considerations to a constitutional pedantry which is not even consistent.

Against this unlucky tendency and an excessive disposition to conciliate Democratic extremists and irresponsible agitators and (? dilatoriness) which they share with nearly all Persians, must be set following achievements:—

Cabinet is composed with one exception of financially honest men, it has made a beginning of reforms, it has saved Mazanderan and Azerbaijan for Persia, it has organised out of very unpromising materials as regards both officers and men an expedition which with little military help from us bids fair to reconquer Gilan from Bolsheviks, from whom it has also succeeded in detaching a very influential ally, Kuchik Khan, thereby stopping native Bolshevik movement in province, it has almost entirely put an end to (? dangerous) Bolshevik intrigue in capital (wherein it has doubtless been helped by reports of excesses committed by Bolsheviks at Resht), it has really taken steps, albeit insufficiently energetic ones, to summon Medjlis, and it has made it possible to convince not only all moderate people here but also many extreme democrats of honesty of Great Britain's intentions towards Persia and of necessity for some kind of agreement between the countries.

As regards this last point progress made has been so satisfactory that, though for reasons already given I am anxious to keep present Government in power so long as I can without moral support from His Majesty's Government their fall would not now inspire me with the same apprehension as it

² No. 531.

³ No. 540.

would have two months ago because I believe it would be possible, even though more difficult, to get agreement through Medjlis under auspices of another Government.

If policy which your Lordship deprecates should now break down, as in default of any encouragement from His Majesty's Government it probably will, I am convinced (? that I) at least have prolonged for three months existence of Persia in her present form and perhaps even have removed permanently danger of her dissolution and ruin of all British interests in the country.

I have not seen Shah since August 8th but have asked him to receive me early next week as soon as ceremonies of Moharram are over. I shall then learn his views and explain to him dangers of situation. He is so far as I know content with present Government and lately conferred on Prime Minister highest decoration in his gift, which I am informed has never been before bestowed on a subject.

Sent to India.

No. 557

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 489 Telegraphic [C 7228/82/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 29, 1920, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 654 of 25th September.¹

With regard to contention that owing to absence of instructions from me you had inevitably to instal the present Cabinet, I will not labour the past history of the present situation in detail in a telegram. I would, however, remind you that in your telegram No. 387 of 15th June you expressed your intention to do your utmost to keep the then Government in power.² On the 23rd June my telegram No. 342 instructed you to support Vossough-ed-Dowleh, 'unless and until it becomes apparent that even our help cannot save him.'³ On the same day I received nine telegrams from you regarding the Cabinet crisis, from which it was apparent that his Highness had already resigned, and that you had acquiesced in the appointment of Mushir-ed-Dowleh.⁴ On the 24th June I therefore authorised you to defer action on my telegram No. 342,⁵ and on the following day, as Vossough-ed-Dowleh had by then definitely resigned, I acquiesced perforce in the new situation (see my telegram No. 347 of 25th June).⁶

¹ No. 556.

² No. 466.

³ No. 481.

⁴ i.e. Tehran telegrams Nos. 400, 401 and 404-10, of which Nos. 400, 401, 404, 406 and 407 are printed above as Nos. 477, 474, 476, 478 and 479 respectively. For Tehran telegrams Nos. 405 and 409 see No. 481, para. 4, and No. 482, n. 1; telegrams Nos. 408 and 410 are not printed.

⁵ See No. 481, n. 5.

⁶ No. 487.

No. 558

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 490 Telegraphic [C 6915/56/34]**

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September 30, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 646 of 21st September:¹ Money to Persian Government. Anglo-Persian Oil Company are not prepared to make advance under heading of arrears of royalty, as they might affect their counter-claims thereby. This matter must therefore await Financial Adviser's arrival in this country.

On other hand oil company are willing to advance at once sum up to total of 350,000*l.*, being current royalties for year 1919-20, which would in ordinary circumstances only be payable some two months hence, when company's books have been made up.

Do Persian Government wish this done? If so, can necessary measures be taken in absence of the Financial Adviser?

¹ No. 554.

No. 559

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 494 Telegraphic [C 7581/82/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 4, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram 657 (of 28th September: interview with Shah¹).

Language of the Shah taken at its face value is satisfactory but it is essential that both he and his Government should realise that His Majesty's Government will have to judge by deeds not words. If therefore our joint interests are not to be jeopardised and the situation is to be saved, the Mejliss *must* assemble and take action on the Agreement in the course of this month. You should therefore lose no opportunity of emphasising this fact both to the Shah and his Ministers.

One point in paragraph 5 of your telegram, as I read it, implies that the Shah considers that His Majesty's Government have modified their original view by now consenting to submission of Agreement to Mejliss. As early as September last year I persistently urged on the then Minister for Foreign Affairs the desirability of submitting Agreement to Mejliss at earliest possible moment.² You should let this point also be realised at Teheran.

¹ Not printed. The interview reported had taken place on the same day. In the course of it the Shah had deplored the delay in completing the elections and in summoning the Majlis, but had said that he thought it inevitable.

² For references in the autumn of 1919 to submission of the Anglo-Persian Agreement to the Majlis, see Vol. IV, Nos. 787, 815, 819.

No. 560

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 8, 12.10 p.m.)

No. 671 Telegraphic [C 8266/910/34]

TEHRAN, October 6, 1920, 12.20 p.m.

My telegram 615.¹

Persian Government reply that they cannot admit that any concession obtained by Khostaria in absence of Medjliss in whatever circumstances can be legal or can be put into execution. I have informed them that I cannot acquiesce in this point of view.

¹ Of Sept. 7, not printed. This informed Lord Curzon that Mr. Norman was carrying out the instructions conveyed in No. 546.

No. 561

The War Office to General Sir A. L. Haldane¹ (Baghdad)

No. 86467 Telegraphic [C 8240/56/34]

Secret. Clear the line

WAR OFFICE, October 6, 1920, 4 p.m.

Your X.322 of 28th September² and X.354 of October 2nd.²

1. Cabinet has decided that in order to stabilize the Persian Government and to assist it in creating a national force capable of securing the safety of the country against both external aggression and internal disorders, the force in Persia should be maintained until the Spring. We must be guided by the following considerations in deciding upon the action which should be taken by our forces in Persia and the extent to which it is advisable to reinforce them.

(i) Norperforce depends for its existence on Mesopotamia. The whole of Norperforce may be withdrawn in case of extreme urgency in order to save the situation in Mesopotamia,³ but this should not be done until after the War Office has been consulted and their approval has been obtained. The situation in Mesopotamia appears to be steadily improving at the present moment and there seems some chance of the country settling down to more or less normal conditions provided the relief of Samawa⁴ is successfully carried out.

(ii) The political and military situation in India on the other hand renders it essential not only to avoid having to make further calls on her for troops, but also to send back at the earliest possible moment those units which have been sent from India in the recent crisis.⁵ In dealing with the situation in

¹ General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Mesopotamia. A copy of this telegram was received in the Foreign Office from the War Office on Oct. 8.

² Not printed.

³ Cf. No. 551.

⁴ The British garrison at Samawa on the Lower Euphrates had been besieged by Mesopotamian rebel forces since Aug. 13. It was relieved on Oct. 14.

⁵ See No. 287, n. 4 above.

North Persia this must now be your first consideration, and this point should be impressed on General Ironside⁶ who must clearly understand that we are not in a position to reinforce him in the event of a serious military invasion of North Persia by the Russians.

(iii) He should also bear in mind that all our experience proves that owing to the political disadvantages which will be urged by the local civil authorities supported by the Foreign Office there will be the utmost difficulty in withdrawing British troops once any place of importance has been occupied by them.

(iv) A difficult problem is presented by the treatment of Starosselski and his force of Persian Cossacks and the solution of this problem will depend chiefly on Ironside's own personality, tact, and firmness. He should endeavour to establish his personal influence with Starosselski and any other Persian forces, so that their energies may be directed to the best advantage in order to meet the wishes of our Political authorities in Teheran.

(v) It must be remembered that Starosselski is before all else a Russian and considers himself the guardian of Russian interests in North Persia although he has been fighting against the Bolsheviks. He also, in common with all Russians, considers that the British have profited unfairly by the internal dissensions in Russia to oust them from their pre-war sphere of influence in Persia and to establish British influence in its place.

2. Taking into account the above considerations, as soon as General Ironside has made himself sufficiently acquainted with situation in North Persia, he should be directed to submit an appreciation of the whole situation there. You should telegraph to the War Office as early as possible this appreciation and proposals for action with your remarks.

Repeated to India; Teheran.

⁶ Maj.-Gen. Sir E. Ironside had assumed command of Norperforce on Sept. 26, 1920.

No. 562

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 9, 11 a.m.)

No. 673 Telegraphic [C 8307/56/34]

TEHRAN, October 7, 1920, 1.30 p.m.

Mushavir-ul-Mamalik Persian special Envoy to Russian Soviet Government reports by telegraph from Baku that he has obtained from Bolsheviks in Baku the following concessions:—

1. All Persian officials who were imprisoned or under restraint have been released and apologies have been tendered.

2. A commission has been formed to restore property plundered from Persian owners and to compensate those whose property has been lost or destroyed.

3. Troops on Caspian Coast of Persia have been recalled and Enzeli is to be evacuated.

4. Persian prisoners in Bolshevik hands will be released if held to be innocent and repatriated if held to be guilty of any plot.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 11, 8.45 a.m.)

No. 678 Telegraphic [C 8380/56/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, October 10, 1920, 3.30 p.m.¹

Your telegram No. 490.²

Persian Government accept with pleasure offer of Anglo-Persian Oil Company which has been received just in time to extricate them from a position of financial embarrassment occasioned by constant demands for more money made by Commander of Cossack Division.

If present extraordinary military expenditure continues to be necessary sum should suffice to meet it and the other needs of the administration for about two months but if, as there now seems to be some reason to hope (see my telegram No. 673),³ danger of invasion is soon removed it ought to last longer.

There appears to be no objection to completion of transaction in the absence of Financial Adviser and Persian Government would be grateful if Company would pay money as soon as possible into Imperial Bank of Persia in London and if latter would advise their chief manager here as soon as payment has been made.⁴

In the meantime, Persian Government are already considering how to raise further sums to keep administration going during two or three months which will follow exhaustion of £350,000 as they fear that if Medjliss discusses Anglo-Persian agreement under threat of impending ruin impression will be produced that a moral pressure is being applied to it and that its deliberations are not free.

Same opinion has been expressed to me in friendly quarters, both European and Persian unconnected with Government and is probably justified but I have always replied that conditions regarding payment of subsidy laid down by His Majesty's Government and accepted by Persian Government are clear and that if latter have found themselves unable even if through no fault of their own to fulfil their part of the bargain the former cannot reasonably be expected to make any further concessions.

I trust however that means may be found even without a renewal of subsidy of solving the difficulty which has arisen chiefly from the necessity of spending large sums on national defence.

It may indeed be hoped that substantial sums will eventually be realised from arrears of royalties due from Anglo-Persian Oil Company while a large increase of revenue is promised from excise on opium and tobacco, administration of which has been reformed. Moreover reopening of communication with Mesopotamia and perhaps soon even with Europe through Caucasus

¹ This telegram was drafted on Oct. 9.

² No. 558.

³ No. 562.

⁴ In his telegram No. 505 of Oct. 16, Lord Curzon informed Mr. Norman that the Company had so paid the sum in question.

may be expected to bring in customs receipts, which have lately been totally lacking except from the South. As however time within which these founts of wealth will become available is uncertain Government consider it imprudent to count on them.

Sent to India.

No. 564

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 501 Telegraphic [C 8306/82/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 12, 1920, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 675 (of 8th October.¹ Mejliss).

When in June an extension of four months was granted for convocation of Mejliss, due allowance was made for oriental procrastination and unavoidable delays.

It would be unfair to hold out any hope of reconsideration and you should therefore on every possible occasion continue to galvanize Persian Prime Minister into activity while there is yet time.

I realize that financial advances from Anglo-Persian Oil Company² may afford the Cabinet some margin beyond 24th October when our payment expires.

Contention outlined in 4th paragraph of your telegram 678 (of 9th October)³ that Mejliss will not be able to discuss agreement in perfect freedom carries no weight whatever with us. If Persian Government are animated by the friendly feelings which they profess they can easily rebut such puerile arguments.

¹ Not printed. In this Mr. Norman reported having sent a message in the sense of Lord Curzon's telegram No. 494 (No. 559 above) to the Shah and having read the telegram to the Persian Prime Minister. The latter had 'said that Government were doing all in their power to hasten opening of elections, but observed that it was impossible entirely to eliminate delays characteristic of Persian methods. . . . In the circumstances he dared not commit himself to a definite date for fear of being obliged by circumstances to break his word.'

² See Nos. 558 and 563.

³ No. 563; see n. 1.

No. 565

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 508 Telegraphic [C 8958/56/34]¹

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October 20, 1920, 1.15 p.m.*

Your tel. No. 690 (of 17 Oct.² Finance.)

If Mejliss do not meet or having met procrastinate over the agreement,

¹ Only the approved draft of this telegram, as here printed, is filed.

² Not printed. In this Mr. Norman had suggested that 'an advance out of loan of £2,000,000' might 'still be feasible for . . . if . . . formula devised by Financial Adviser still appears objectionable to Treasury another might be devised which might be more acceptable to the effect that advance will be repayable out of loan if agreement is accepted by Mejliss and that other arrangements will at once be made to provide for repayment in contrary eventuality'.

H.M.G. will not entertain idea of further financial aid from public funds. Idea therefore of advance mentioned in penultimate para. of your tel. would not be feasible.

As regards monies from other sources my attitude towards financial adviser's proposals will be guided by circs. and conditions then prevailing.

To hold out further hopes wd. be misleading.

No. 566

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 25, 11.30 p.m.)

No. 703 Telegraphic [C 9573/267/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, October 25, 1920, 11 a.m.

General Officer Commanding-in-chief Mesopotamia has doubtless reported to War Office news received from North Persia Force that division have evacuated Resht for second time owing, according to their Officer Commanding, to bad *morale*.¹

General Officer Commanding North Persia who is here assures me that this has been done without adequate military reason, for British officer whom he sent to Resht to observe operations reports none of sanguinary combats, which Colonel Starosselski alleges to have been waged, have really taken place. Cossacks who are in superior force have not been seriously attacked and have suffered no casualties.

This new retreat appears to General Officer Commanding North Persia Force and to me completely to change the situation of Colonel Starosselski and his Russian officers.

Whereas the Colonel, though his task has in fact been easy, has hitherto been able to pose as a national hero who was waging a successful campaign against enemies of Persia he has now shown himself to be an incompetent officer of doubtful courage, whose continued presence in command of Persian troops constitutes a danger for the country. It will moreover not be difficult to prove that he has appropriated a large portion of the money given him to defray expenses of the expedition.

Situation is also profoundly affected by recent change in command of North Persia Force² for whereas late General Officer Commanding considered himself unable with the troops at his disposal to guarantee the defence of the Capital against a hostile advance from North, his successor is perfectly confident of his ability to do so.

Conditions prevailing when I despatched my earlier telegram pointing out insuperable nature of obstacles to immediate dismissal of Colonel Starosselski³ have thus ceased to exist and present situation appears to General Ironside and to myself to afford opportunity for settling the whole question more favourably than any likely to occur for many months to come.

General Ironside and I therefore explained situation to Prime Minister on

¹ This evacuation by the Cossack division had begun on Oct. 21.

² See No. 561, n. 6.

³ The reference is probably to Tehran telegram No. 379 of June 14, not printed.

above lines and urged him at once to dismiss Colonel Starosselski and put a Persian in command of the Division as a fighting head with British officers to assist him. We pointed out that if this were done it would be easy to reorganise the division and re-occupy Resht, thus obliging the enemy eventually to leave Enzeli for lack of supplies.

If on the other hand Colonel Starosselski were allowed to retain his command though he would doubtless . . .⁴ once more advance, he would be obliged to retreat for the third time at first threat of opposition, as he obviously could not control his men who had no confidence in him.

I added for my own part that I could not justify to His Majesty's Government the expenditure of further British money on an expedition conducted in this way and further urged that when Colonel Starosselski was dismissed he should at the same time be ordered to submit his accounts to examination by somebody appointed by Government from outside division which he has always hitherto refused to do. By this means a part at least of sums which he has stolen might be recovered.

It was known to me I said that Colonel Starosselski was using some of British money given to him to conduct a propaganda against Great Britain, Anglo-Persian Agreement, and policy of Government. I accordingly . . .⁵ that no primary⁶ demands on his part should be met. To this Prime Minister readily agreed.

Prime Minister said that he personally concurred in opinion that moment had come to dismiss Colonel Starosselski but as I foresaw he demurred to appoint British officer⁷ to Division as being certain to weaken position of Government with whose policy it would be inconsistent and to react unfavourably on prospects of agreement. Another solution must be found (? and he) would have to consult Shah and some of his colleagues.

General Ironside and I both replied there was no other solution and demonstrated impracticability of some which he proposed.

I added His Majesty's Government as soon as they knew the facts would refuse permit for expenditure of any further money on expedition unless proposed arrangements were adopted. It was moreover essential to welfare of Persia that enemy should be expelled from her soil and I could not imagine that any sensible Persian could find fault with Government for taking the only step which could bring about this result.

Disappearance of Colonel Starosselski will so greatly facilitate working of Agreement, and notably organisation of uniform force, which if he remains will be very difficult especially after withdrawal of British troops, that greatly as I should regret resignation of present Persian Government during whose term of office so much has been done to dispel suspicion of our motives which previously existed I consider that their work is near enough complete to justify us in taking risk.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'equally'.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'asked'.

⁶ This word read 'further' in the text as sent.

⁷ This word read 'officers' in the text as sent.

I am confirmed in this opinion by hope that improvement in our position will enable us to find what we could not have found four months ago viz. another Government at once popular and willing to work with us and able to steer agreement through Medjliss while free from pedantry which characterises present one.

Such a Government would have to pledge themselves before taking office to dismiss Russian officers and demand submission of their accounts to examination, to accept arrangement proposed for command of Cossack Division, to expedite as far as possible complete elections and assemble Medjliss, and to do their best to obtain its assent to agreement with as little modification as possible by laying before it an accurate statement of financial position and prospects of country and openly advocating acceptance of agreement.

When once Shah is (? assured) of his personal (? safety), I do not (? anticipate) great difficulty in persuading him to agree to dismiss Colonel Starosselski even if, as I suspect, he has shared fruits of latter's depredations, or even to appoint British officers to the Division.

I trust that your Lordship will approve step already taken and should be glad to learn whether in case of necessity I may act as above proposed.

General Ironside is reporting to General Officer Commanding Mesopotamia, on purely military aspects of the questions.

Sent to India (? Bagdad) No. 334.

No. 567

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 26, 10.10 a.m.)

No. 704 Telegraphic [C 9600/267/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, October 25, 1920, 4.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 703.¹

Prime Minister told me this morning that he had discussed with Shah question of Colonel Starosselsky's dismissal and that His Majesty had expressed the opinion that the moment was not opportune.

As a matter of fact Colonel Starosselsky had already resigned but his resignation had not been accepted.

Prime Minister himself thought Starosselsky's services should be retained for the moment and that he should be given another chance of reorganising division.

If, however, he insisted on resigning, another and more honest Russian should be appointed in his place. Prime Minister suggested Colonel Dobromyslof, who was expelled from division by Starosselsky because he refused to countenance latter's peculiarities.²

As an alternative, Prime Minister proposed a neutral officer who would, however, have to be summoned from Europe as there was no suitable person of the kind on the spot.

¹ No. 566.

² The text as sent read: 'peculations'.

Prime Minister repeated that appointment of British officer at this moment would not only be contrary to principles on which Government had worked from the beginning but injurious to British interests and prospects of Anglo-Persian Agreement, because public opinion which was becoming favourable to us would be turned against us.

I said that I felt sure His Majesty's Government would never tolerate substitution of another Russian, however deserving, for Colonel Starosselsky while, even if they were willing to agree to temporary appointment of a neutral, place³ was impracticable because it would involve too long delay. The only way to ensure defence of country was that which I had indicated and I could not allow more British money to be paid to division unless it were adopted.

I thought it probable, if my advice were rejected, His Majesty's Government might withdraw British troops from North Persia.

Prime Minister said that, if I persisted in my demand, Government would be bound in conscience to resign.

We agreed, however, that the first thing to be done was for me to see Shah which I have arranged to do to-morrow.

Sent to India, Norperforce 456 M. and High Commissioner, Bagdad 335 who will kindly give copy to General Officer Commanding.

³ Amended in the Foreign Office to read 'plan', as in the text sent from Tehran.

No. 568

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 29, 10.10 a.m.)

No. 707 Telegraphic [E 13385/20/44]

TEHRAN, October 26, 1920, 10.30 a.m.

Mr. Engert the newly arrived secretary of United States Legation, whose Chief happens to be away for a few days, told me to-day that he intended to ask Persian Government whether they would object to two American geologists prospecting for oil in Northern Persia not with a view to obtain concessions but merely to see whether it appeared to exist in paying quantities.

Recognizing special position of Great Britain in Persia he wished before taking above step to tell me quite unofficially of his intention.

He said that interest felt by people of United States in Persia and Mesopotamia was confined to question of oil in which however it was very keen because in a country where so many possessed motor cars matter affected daily life of most.

Thus a very bad impres[s]ion had been made in United States by refusal of His Majesty's Government last year to allow Americans to prospect for oil in Mesopotamia¹ and much of feeling of hostility to Great Britain which existed in certain circles in United States was due to idea that she wished to exclude the latter from participation in such enterprises.

¹ See Vol. IV, Nos. 348 and 370.

He felt sure that if American capital were allowed to share in exploitation of oilfields of Northern Persia if any were shown to exist an excellent effect would be produced on opinion in United States and that position of Great Britain in this country from a political point of view, which United States had of course no power nor any wish to challenge, would be greatly strengthened. He considered it most important to dispel impression which appeared to prevail throughout Near and Middle East that Great Britain and United States were rivals and that appeals could be lodged with the latter against activities of the former.

I thought it better to abstain from mentioning claim of Anglo-Persian Oil Company to Khoshtaria concessions² and merely said that I could not tell what view His Majesty's Government would take of matter but would ask.

It appears to me to be worth considering whether apart from conciliating opinion in United States admission of American participation in oil enterprises in Northern Persia would not be of advantage to us supposing that Russian commercial penetration in those regions again becomes a danger as it probably will some day for instead of being alone in resisting it we should then have the help of a Power capable of exercising considerable pressure on Russia in certain ways.

Mr. Engert appears extremely friendly but it is strange that he should take advantage of a very short absence of United States Minister to raise a question of such magnitude.

Addressed to Foreign Office, sent to India, copies despatched by post Bagdad for Norperforce.

² See Nos. 404, 545, and 546 above.

No. 569

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 27, 9.45 a.m.)

No. 709 Telegraphic [C 9759/267/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, October 26, 1920, 5.40 p.m.

My telegram No. 704.¹

I related to the Shah to-day true story of retreat of Cossack Division from Resht and formulated my charges of incompetence, corruption, and anti-British propaganda against Russian officers.

His Majesty told me that Prime Minister had informed him of my demand for dismissal of commander of division and assured me of his intention to carry out pledges which he had given me on the subject. He had no desire to retain Russian officers whom he knew to be corrupt and of doubtful loyalty but he did not think moment suitable for giving effect to his promises.

He feared that if he took (? step) now it would have very bad effect on public opinion. Everybody would believe Great Britain was putting Anglo-Persian agreement in force without consent of Mejlis and (? trying to) . . .²

¹ No. 567.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'trying to possess herself of Persia'.

(? seize) Persia. Sympathy with Bolshevism would at once attain proportions which it had reached in time of the late Government and he himself would become as much (? hate)d as had been Vossugh-ed-Dowleh. As had been the case last June enemy would receive thousands of invitations from influential people to come to Teheran.

Cossacks too, incited by their Russian officers, might go over in a body to the enemy or alternatively advance on Teheran.

He proposed that Colonel Starosselski should be retained and ordered to reorganise his force and advance again not this time alone but together with British troops.

I said that substitution of British for Russian officers, was nothing to do with agreement but was isolated measure indispensable for the defence of the country. According to my information so far from being unpopular it would have good effect and restore public confidence nor was there any fear of recrudescence of sympathy with Bolshevism seeing that situation now was very different from what it had been in June.

There was no danger that Cossacks would take either of the courses which His Majesty feared because they were far too disorganised for such action, had lost all confidence in their officers and were as I understood for the most part between Menjil and Kasvin so that they had British troops to their front and rear. General Officer Commanding North Persia Force had moreover absolutely guaranteed safety of capital.³

I therefore assured Shah that he was in no danger and urged him to appoint his uncle, Nosret-es-Sultaneh, to nominal command of division with British officers under him.

I (? explained) why alternative plan suggested by Shah was quite impracticable and why present moment offered opportunity of getting rid of Colonel Starosselski which would never recur.

I added that if my advice was not taken not only should I feel obliged to refuse to allow any further British money to be paid to division⁴ but it was unlikely that His Majesty's Government would permit British troops to remain any longer in Persia. I thought matter so important that I was willing to see present Government go rather than abandon my demand. Shah though evidently far from being convinced by my arguments or accepting my assurances regarding his personal safety replied that his one

³ Telegram No. 86725 of Oct. 29 from the War Office to G.O.C. Mesopotamia, of which a paraphrase was received in the Foreign Office on Nov. 8, referred to this sentence as follows (in paraphrase): 'The Army Council are of opinion that a false impression may have been conveyed unwittingly by General Ironside. The Army Council are not prepared to endorse any such guarantee and . . . every care must be taken to refrain from any commitments that may prevent the complete withdrawal of Norperforce should it be considered desirable to adopt such a course.'

⁴ In his telegram No. 705 of Oct. 25 (not printed) Mr. Norman informed Lord Curzon that since he thought it 'very important that no more money should be given to Cossack division so long as Colonel Starosselsky remains in command', he had officially asked the Imperial Bank of Persia 'to refuse, pending further instructions, to pay Persian Government any part of £350,000 now deposited with them on account of advance granted by Anglo-Persian Oil Company'.

wish was to work with Great Britain in the interests of Persia, and that he should never refuse to take any course on which I really insisted. He therefore gave me his word that (? advice) which I had given would be accepted. He asked however for a day (? during) which to decide whether he could himself take the responsibility of complying with my demand, or, if he could not do so, to find another way of carrying it out.

I was unable . . .⁵ on that account to devolve any clear (? meaning) of this last phrase (? Shah) merely (? reiterating) repetitions of his assurance that my advice was accepted but it struck me that he was thinking of abdication.

Shah said that as in the circumstances present Government would certainly not remain in office we had better set to work to find another, and asked my advice regarding the choice of a Prime Minister.

I proposed Sipahdar-i-Azam. Shah welcomed this proposal and we discussed for a short time what composition of new Cabinet should be.

I should add that I had previously caused Sipahdar to be sounded and had ascertained that he is prepared to carry out policy which I propose.

I am to see Shah again to-morrow.

Sent to India No. 709, Bagdad 336, Kasvin 458 M.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. In the text as sent from Tehran this sentence read: 'I was unable to obtain from H.M. any clear explanation of this last phrase, my attempts merely eliciting repetitions of his assurance that my advice was accepted, but it struck me that he was thinking of abdication.'

No. 570

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 28, 10.30 a.m.)

No. 710 Telegraphic [C 9847/267/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, October 27, 1920, 5.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 709.¹

Shah told me this morning that after seeing me yesterday he had sent for Prime Minister and told him of decision to dismiss Officer commanding Cossack division.

Prime Minister had declined to withdraw his objections to this course and had tendered resignation of Government.

* His Majesty will accept this at once and entrust the formation of a new government to Sipahdar-i-Aazam, of whose willingness to carry out our programme I have already assured myself.

He proposes to instruct the new Prime Minister to convey to Colonel Starosselski the news of his dismissal in His Majesty's name.

I approved of this proposal but said that I should prefer to defer the step till I had had time to consult the General Officer Commanding, Norperforce. A short delay would do no harm for it could only increase the disorganisation of the Cossacks and weaken Colonel Starosselski's position. Personally I was strongly opposed to allowing Colonel Starosselski to return to Tehran, where

¹ No. 569.

his presence could only do harm by giving him an opportunity for further intrigue. In my opinion, he and his officers should be despatched to Mesopotamia straight from Kazvin as soon as transport could be found for them. General Officer Commanding, Norperforce, has already made arrangements for taking over temporarily the command of the Cossack Division in case the Russian officers leave before the arrival of the British officers designated by the War Office to assist the new Persian Commander.*²

I think it so important that Colonel Starosselski should leave the country, as soon as possible after his dismissal that I am doubtful whether to insist on his submitting his accounts to examination since this could not take place satisfactorily in his absence and when once he has gone what little chance there may be of forcing him to refund any part of sums which he has appropriated will disappear.

Shah said that he wished to make it clear that he had yielded to my demand not in consequence of threat of probable withdrawal of British troops if he resisted it but in order to prove his sincere desire to further British policy and that he had taken the step against his better judgment for he felt sure that result would be creation of a strong wave of sympathy with Bolshevism all over the country. We were now his sole supporter, and he begged that we would not abandon him. He asked very insistently whether General Officer Commanding, Norperforce, absolutely guaranteed safety of Capital. I replied that I fully appreciated motive of His Majesty's action and realised that a threat could not be necessary to induce him to accept my advice and I tried to reassure him on other points.

He then said that he hoped for two favours in return for concessions which he had made involving as it did a breach of faith with Colonel Starosselski (to whom I was unaware that he had made a promise in direct contradiction with that given, and several times confirmed, to myself). One was that subsidy of 15,000 tomans a month formerly allowed him might be again paid to him till Medjliss met with arrears from date of its discontinuance. He tried to persuade me to promise this on my own responsibility. I declined to do this but undertook to submit request to your Lordship. Personally I think that it would be well worth while to grant this request especially in view of approaching assembly of Medjliss which reduces amount to be paid to one month's subsidy besides arrears—a very moderate price for control of Cossack division only organised force in the country and acquisition of Shah's goodwill; I might also be authorised to express to Shah satisfaction of His Majesty's Government at attitude which he has adopted.

Shah's other request was that he should be allowed to make another journey of six months to Europe in April a subject which he has often reverted to in previous conversations. He complained of what he calls 'Moral fatigue' and assures me that his doctor considers change necessary for his health.

Truth doubtless is that after his recent experience of life in foreign capitals he is bored by existence which a sovereign must lead in this country.

² The passages between asterisks have been printed from the text in the Tehran archives as the text received in the Foreign Office is here very corrupt.

He begged me to support this request and expressed hope that if he went he would not be victim of intrigues here during his absence as was the case on occasion of his last journey and that he would be allowed to return when he wished which he was then prevented from doing.

I said that there was plenty of time between now and next April in which to settle this question.

Shah then expressed wish to grant small pensions to departing Russian officers, some of whom had not had opportunities of enriching themselves which Commander had enjoyed.

I said that I thought this entirely superfluous and was disposed rather to insist on their returning money which they had already stolen.

Shah strongly deprecated such a demand which he said would appear to be an act of ingratitude for past services.

Truth is that Shah has . . .ed¹ in Colonel Starosselski's depredations, and has lately received from him pearl necklace worth 35,000 tomans.

I learn moreover from a sure but confidential source that Colonel Starosselski insisted on receiving 50,000 tomans of last sum given to him in Tehran bank notes of large denominations which are not currency at Resht where he was at the time and that Shah shortly afterwards paid into Imperial Bank of Persia similar notes to value of 40,000 tomans to which no other origin can be attributed.

Repeated High Commissioner, Bagdad for communication to General Officer Commanding, copy to Norperforce.

Sent to India.

¹ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'shared'.

No. 571

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received October 29, 10.15 a.m.)

No. 711 Telegraphic [C 9884/56/34]

Most urgent. Clear the line

TEHRAN, October 28, 1920, 11.30 a.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Sipahdar called on me yesterday and stated conditions on which he would be prepared to form Cabinet and carry out policy detailed in my telegram No. 703.²

One of these conditions is financial. New Cabinet will be faced with deficit of about 1,500,000 tomans against which there is sum of 1,000,000 tomans from Oil Company now held by Bank (see my telegram No. 705).³ Sipahdar considers it necessary to pay greater part of arrears of gendarmerie whose services will be required at once for preservation of order and one half of arrears of Government Departments and Court.

After these payments have been made about half a million should be available for current administrative expenditure for which it will be sufficient till end of November.

¹ No. 570.

² No. 566.

³ See No. 569, n. 4.

Sipahdar states that no Cabinet will accept office with knowledge that only one month's financial provision can be reckoned on. He therefore urges that monthly subsidy of 350,000 tomans be continued for one or two months and expenditure of re-organisation and maintenance of Cossack Division be borne by us pending financial adjustment with Persian Government.

Present crisis may be considered as an extraordinary and isolated event calling for special financial treatment.

Expulsion of Starosselski and his Russian officers and virtual control by British officers of the only regular Military Force in Persia would make us practically independent of vagaries of Persian internal politics and in absence of external developments ensure gradual execution of agreement. His Majesty's Government may therefore perhaps consent to provide new Cabinet with funds sufficient to enable it to carry out proposed arrangement, preserve order and keep administrative machine going for at least two months.⁴ For this purpose monthly subsidy of 350,000 tomans might be continued for that time, (? and) General Officer Commanding Norperforce be authorised to deduct⁵ expenditure necessary for maintenance and reorganisation of Cossack Division pending financial adjustment when large loan is accepted. If subsidy cannot possibly be continued I would suggest that an advance of 700,000 tomans should be made to Persian Government to be repaid out of a subsequent loan to be made by British Government according to formula suggested by Financial Adviser's agreement of payment accepted by late Cabinet (see my telegram No. 610).⁶ This formula though not approved by His Majesty's Government was never so far as I know definitely rejected and in view of supreme importance of present developments it may be found acceptable.

There remains possibility of obtaining within a reasonable time arrears of subsidy due to Persian Government by Anglo-Persian Oil Company regarding which Financial Adviser will be doubtless shortly able to deal.

I should be grateful if I might be informed from time to time [of] progress of negotiations of⁷ this question.

Sipahdar states⁸ that in view of attitude adopted by late Government, new Cabinet could not accept an advance admittedly subject to repayment out of £2,000,000 loan without exciting dangerous popular opposition especially as it would inaugurate its term of office by installing British officers in Persian army, a measure contrary to policy of fallen Cabinet. It was agreed between us that measure would have to be explained as an isolated one indispensable for safety of country and independent of agreement, policy of new Government regarding which would not professedly differ from that of their predecessors.

Sent to India. Copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

⁴ Mr. Norman reiterated this hope in his telegram No. 722 of Nov. 3, not printed.

⁵ This word read 'incur' in the text as sent from Tehran.

⁶ No. 547.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'negotiations regarding'.

⁸ This word read 'explained' in the text as sent.

No. 572

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 2, 11.15 a.m.)

No. 715 Telegraphic [C 10169/9578/34]

TEHRAN, October 29, 1920, 11.35 a.m.

Your telegram No. 515.¹

Musaddiq us Sultaneh who had reached Shiraz on his way from Europe to Teheran on his way to take up his appointment as Minister of Justice in late Cabinet² was asked to remain at Shiraz and assume office of Governor-General which he did.

This was done partly on account of importance of having a Governor-General on the spot as soon as possible to superintend migration of tribes to their winter quarters, which is always apt to give rise to disturbances.

Arrangement was also economical as it obviated necessity for payment of heavy travelling expenses etc., to a Governor-General from Teheran and I (? agreed) to it on receiving an assurance that Musaddiq would not be retained in office if found to be unsuitable.

Appointment was agreeable to local notables, and he appears to get on well with His Majesty's Consul.

Late Prime Minister described him to me as honest, intelligent, well educated, capable and very friendly to us.

¹ Of Oct. 25, not printed.

² In Mr. Norman's despatch No. 106 of July 9 (not printed) reporting the composition of Mushir-ed-Dowleh's cabinet, Dr. Mussadiq, as he was later known, was reported to be 'hostile to his cousin, Nusret-ud-Dowleh, and to Vosough-ud-Dowleh. . . . He was formerly Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Finance. He has taken a law degree in France, and this is perhaps his only qualification for the Ministry of Justice. He has no political influence, and does not appear to enjoy much popularity.'

No. 573

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 521 Telegraphic [C 9847/267/34]

Most urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, October 29, 1920, 1.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 710 of 27th October.¹

I find some difficulty in forming or expressing an opinion on a situation in which there appears to have been a complete *volte-face* in Persian policy, and in which I am again presented, in this case without the slightest warning, with a *fait accompli*. Till a week ago I had been led by you to believe that success of British policy in Persia was inseparable from Premiership of Mushir-ud-Dowleh, summons of Medjlis by him, suspension of Anglo-Persian Agreement *in interim*, and toleration and support of Starosselski, and the doubts which were entertained in some quarters as to expediency of this policy have been uniformly dismissed by you as unfounded. Now all this is

¹ No. 570.

changed, and the leading actors are in course of voluntary or compulsory disappearance from the scene without any previous consultation with His Majesty's Government.

In these circumstances I must leave you and General Ironside to deal with a situation which appears suddenly to have developed since arrival of latter, and which no instructions from this end can avail to control. I will only therefore offer following observations:

Sudden deportation of all Russian officers, which was vetoed when proposed some months ago, may not be a very easy matter. Their replacement by British officers, even if expedient, will take time and raise financial questions of grave importance. Renewal of Shah's subsidy cannot of course be entertained. The idea of a second visit to Europe is altogether premature and your language with regard to it was correct.

In deciding upon new policy in the manner which you have described, and in selection of agents to work it, you will doubtless recognise that General Ironside and yourself have assumed no slight responsibility, which will require the justification of success. This I trust that you may obtain, while asking you to bear in mind that the intentions and objects of His Majesty's Government, as to which you have been frequently informed, remain unaffected by these vicissitudes.

I shall await further information from you with anxiety.

Repeated to India.

No. 574

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 2, 10 a.m.)

No. 718 Telegraphic [C 10170/267/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, November 1, 1920, 11.40 a.m.

My telegram No. 716.¹

Colonel Starosselski reached Teheran on evening of October 29 and was soon afterwards received by Shah who as I learnt yesterday from His Majesty's Private Secretary spoke to him as I had requested.

Yesterday morning Colonel Starosselski and Russian Chargé d'Affaires (with whom however he is not on cordial terms) protested to Sipahdar against cession of buildings, arms, munitions of war and other property of Cossack Division which they asserted belonged to late Imperial Russian Government.

They also demanded constitution of a Commission to take over from Colonel Starosselski accounts of Division, a demand which was at once complied with.

¹ Of Oct. 29, not printed. This had reported the return of Col. Starosselski to the capital, despite Mr. Norman's endeavours to prevent this. Mr. Norman had therefore sent a message to the Shah requesting that he should receive the Colonel, 'reprimand him severely for his disobedience, order him at once to hand over his command to Persian officer designated to receive it, to return to his house and remain there without seeing anybody, and to leave again for Kasvin tomorrow with same Persian officer under pain of being sent back under arrest'.

Having learnt that Colonel Starosselski had been furnishing money (to amount it was said of 20,000 tomans) to certain clergy with a view to a creation of disturbances in his favour with result that some slight disorder had occurred in Bazaar, and that he had armed 150 recruits who are in barracks in town and surrounded his house with machine guns I asked Shah with approval of Sipahdar for a further audience.

His Majesty received me in afternoon when I said that I considered continued presence of Colonel Starosselski at Teheran dangerous to public order and begged His Majesty to send his Private Secretary to Sipahdar with an oral message to the effect that Colonel Starosselski in interests of Shah and country and in his own should return to Kazvin forthwith having named a representative here who should hand over (? his) accounts to Commission appointed to receive them. Sipahdar should forward this message to Colonel Starosselski and Secretary should also give it to him direct.

Shah though manifestly reluctant to take this step offered no resistance to my demand and gave necessary instructions in my presence and that of Oriental Secretary of Legation² on which I insisted, in order to be able to assure myself that my words were correctly rendered.

Shah however declared himself obliged to add that he was acting on my demand to which I raised no objection.

Secretary delivered message to Sipahdar before Mr. Smart and myself.

Later Russian Chargé d'Affaires called and speaking with great emotion expressed regret that I had not arranged through him in a friendly way for departure of Colonel Starosselski a course which would, in fact, have been injudicious because it would have put latter on his guard and given him more time to take counter-measures.

I gave Chargé d'Affaires a very frank account of reasons for my action against which he could find little to say except that I was attacking most important Russian concession in Persia. He asked me whether I intended to annul it or whether a Russian officer would be allowed to remain in order to safeguard it, but I replied that I could not answer these questions.

Chargé d'Affaires who generally comes to me for advice when in a difficulty then asked whether he should address a written protest to Persian Government and I replied that I could see no harm in that.

His motive is to be able to justify himself to representatives of late Russian Government at Paris to whom he has sent a telegram.

He (? returned) later to say that Colonel Starosselski would leave that evening if I would give him a written guarantee that he and his family would be allowed to travel to Paris by way of Mesopotamia without molestation from British Authorities and that he would have an opportunity before departure of rebutting . . .³ which had been brought against him. (I understand he has already burnt a good many of these accounts.)

I expressed willingness to meet his wishes on first point on condition that he abstained from any action direct or indirect, which might cause embarrass-

² Mr. W. A. Smart.

³ The text is here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'charges of corruption'.

ment to Persian or British Authorities but said that second was no affair of mine and that he should settle it with Persian Government before he left Kazvin.

Chargé d'Affaires accepted this; I gave guarantee and Colonel Starosselski left at 11.30 p.m., arriving at Kazvin as I have ascertained this morning.

I have asked General Officer Commanding Norperforce to make sure that he does not return here and to keep a watch on his correspondence and general conduct so long as he remains.

According to Chargé d'Affaires the motive of Colonel Starosselski's demand for a guarantee was fear that I might have him assassinated.

Persian Officer who is to assume temporary command of division also left for Kazvin last night.

(Sent to India.)

No. 575

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 4, 11.10 p.m.)

*No. 724 Telegraphic [C 10413/267/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, November 4, 1920, 11.30 a.m.

My telegram No. 718.¹

On 31st October and 1st November there were small demonstrations in town against Anglo-Persian Agreement, largely made by school children, and organised by agents paid by Colonel Staros[s]elsky, but they were easily suppressed by police and there were no casualties.

Since then perfect quiet has prevailed, for agents, realising that their patron is gone for good, have wisely decided to waste no more money on an agitation which can lead to no result and to put balance of sum in their pockets.

I cannot discover that any Persian really regrets dismissal of Russians, though some interested persons are using it as a weapon against agreement.

My staff and I are doing our best to show that two questions are totally distinct and to make known reasons for step taken, and Sipahdar, who has already issued one proclamation on the subject, proposes to publish further statement as soon as his Government are in office.

Attitude of press is satisfactory and at least two newspapers, including semi-official journal, have published helpful articles.

Arrangements for departure of Russians are proceeding smoothly under superintendence of General Officer Commanding Norperforce, and Colonel Staros[s]elsky himself with his family leaves for Mesopotamia on 6th November.

Process of deportation necessarily involves some expense and I am dealing with this question in a separate telegram.²

Elections have now progressed sufficiently to admit of opening of Medjliss within a month if new Government show real determination to insist on immediate departure for capital of absentee deputies, and I am impressing on

¹ No. 574.

² Tehran No. 723 of Nov. 4, not printed; see No. 580 below.

Siphadar [*sic*] importance of this point. Government, however, must of course first take office, and in order to permit of their doing so an assurance of further slight financial help is needed.

It is extreme urgency of this point which has impelled me to despatch my telegrams Nos. 722³ and 723,⁴ distasteful though I know subject to be to His Majesty's Government.

Copy by bag to Norperforce; sent to India.

³ Of Nov. 3, not printed; see No. 571, n. 4.

⁴ See n. 2 above.

No. 576

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 532 Telegraphic [C 10290/56/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 5, 1920, 2.30 p.m.

Cabinet have now discussed situation created by recent political changes carried out under your auspices at Tehran. In my telegram No. 521 of 29th October I remarked that policy of His Majesty's Government remains unaffected by these events.¹ But it is necessary to be absolutely explicit on this point. As far back as June we insisted upon summoning of Medjliss and submission of Anglo-Persian Agreement to that body within a period of four months, and we refused to continue subsidy beyond that period.² In spite of your repeated assurances that elections were being expedited, it is impossible to avoid conclusion that, for whatever reason, the engagements of Persian Government in this respect have been deliberately ignored. We are thus confronted with fact that, though it is now fifteen months since the agreement was signed, no serious attempt has been made by two successive Persian Governments to submit it to approval of Persian Parliament. We cannot allow this evasion to continue, and we must insist that Medjliss be convened in the course of a month from now, that agreement be placed before it, and that decision to accept or reject it be arrived at before end of year. Refusal or failure to take this step will be attended with the consequences of which I have already more than once warned you as the sequel of rejection.

There remains the question of financing the new Government in the interval. His Majesty's Government are unable to depart from their previous decision in this respect, and Persian Government must find relief in other quarters. They have already received 350,000*l.* from Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and Financial Adviser will endeavour, while in this country,³ to obtain arrears of subsidy from same source. We cannot consider alternative of advance against future loan. Persian Government have themselves declined to touch existing loan, and cannot at the same time exploit and profit by their own compunction.

On the other hand, as British officers have taken over temporary control

¹ No. 573.

² No. 497.

³ Mr. Armitage-Smith had arrived in London on Oct. 25.

of Cossack division, it seems not unreasonable that we should bear cost of reorganisation and maintenance pending financial adjustment with the Persian Government. This we are willing to do.

It is my duty to inform you at the same time that a strong belief was expressed by the Cabinet that British Parliament, which has a very scant appreciation of the intricacies of Persian politics, will be most unlikely to vote for the continued maintenance of British forces in Northern Persia beyond the spring, and that we cannot indefinitely assume responsibility for filling the gap caused by dilatoriness of Persian Government in carrying out report of military mission and creating the national force for which they had pleaded for years, until its realisation was within their grasp.

Persian Government and nation now have final opportunity of determining upon which path they prefer to travel, and the test cannot be further delayed. (Repeated to India.)

No. 577

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 8, 10.15 a.m.)

*No. 725 Telegraphic [C 10636/267/34]**

TEHRAN, November 5, 1920, 10.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 521.¹

I had hoped that my telegram No. 703² had made clear reasons why *volte-face* referred to by your Lordship appeared immediately necessary.

Prompt action was required, because had I awaited instructions, which could hardly have taken less than a week to reach me, opportunity presented would undoubtedly have passed, and Colonel Starosselski, by intimidation and bribery, have acquired support of a numerous faction, and thus quickly have recovered position of which his second military failure had temporarily deprived him. Signs were indeed not lacking that even before I acted this process had already begun.

I had to choose between sacrifice of a Government who certainly had power to get Anglo-Persian Agreement accepted by Medjliss, and who had been useful to us because our support of them had helped to dispel suspicions entertained by Persians regarding our policy and intentions, and retention of services of a body of officers whose presence was not only dangerous to Persia from a military point of view and ruinous to her financially, but would have made it very difficult, if not impossible, to carry out agreement, even after it had gained parliamentary approval.

As long ago as 25th September last I expressed in my telegram No. 654 opinion that, even if Government of Mushir-ed-Dowleh fell, it might be possible, in view of improvement in our position here, to find another Cabinet able to get agreement accepted,³ and, as will be seen from my telegram No. 703,² this opinion has since been strengthened.

¹ No. 573.

² No. 566.

³ No. 556.

In view, therefore, of important advantages to be gained by disappearance of Russian officers, it seemed wise to accept a greatly diminished risk of rejection of agreement, especially since absence of any military force hostile to us must deprive our enemies of most of the power which they would otherwise possess of influencing Assembly against us.

Moreover, as your Lordship had frequently expressed distrust of late Cabinet, I could not doubt that His Majesty's Government would view their resignation with satisfaction.

On the other hand, His Majesty's Government had made it clear that they attached great importance to dismissal of Russian officers. During Shah's stay in Europe they strongly pressed His Majesty to remove them, and since my arrival here urgency of matter has been constantly impressed on me, even though, as I tried to explain, it was impossible for me to take any action.

It is true your telegram No. 422 foreshadowed possibility of a settlement with Colonel Starosselski at some future time,⁴ and telegrams Nos. 462⁵ and 469⁶ appeared to show that this solution had been afterwards rejected.

I had, therefore, no reason to doubt that an early settlement of question would be welcome to His Majesty's Government.

I cannot so far trace any paper showing that a proposal to deport all his Russian officers was vetoed some months ago, as stated in your telegram,⁷ though it would have been certainly impossible to carry it out at that time. At present their removal appears to offer little difficulty.

As regards future of Cossack division, I hope shortly to be able to submit proposals after consultation with military authorities.

I am, of course, fully prepared to assume responsibility of step which I have taken, and, if it fails, to accept its consequences in so far as they affect myself.

I can safely leave General Ironsides [*sic*] to present his own case to War Office, so will only observe—

1. That coincidence of his arrival with change in situation, which rendered it possible to obtain dismissal of Russian officers, should not induce belief that he is solely responsible in the matter, though he has co-operated with me most whole-heartedly and efficiently throughout and continues to do so; and

2. That paragraph 4 of War Office telegram No. 86467, D.M.O., to Bagdad⁸ appears to give him the discretion to deal with Colonel Starosselski, which he has used with such good effect.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 344, for General Officer Commanding; copy to Norperforce; sent to India.)

⁴ No. 540.

⁶ Of Sept. 16, not printed.

⁷ i.e. No. 573.

⁵ No. 550.

⁸ No. 561.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 8, 9.10 p.m.)

No. 730 Telegraphic [C 10696/56/34]

Clear the line

TEHRAN, November 8, 1920, 10.10 a.m.¹

Your telegram No. 532.²

Attitude of His Majesty's Government while perfectly consistent and justified from a logical point of view must naturally produce, and is indeed already producing, unfavourable results in practice, for it is impossible to prevent cause of delay in formation of a Government from becoming generally known and to convince Persians of reasonableness of our action.

In the course of a long conversation with Sipahdar yesterday I tried, but without success, to induce him to accept from loan £2,000,000 a sum sufficient to enable Government to pay their way for a month or two after funds now at their disposal are exhausted. He objected that such a course would provoke overwhelming public opposition and moreover would be inconsistent with declaration which he had felt bound to make before consenting to undertake task of forming a Government.

All that I could persuade him to promise was to consult his political friends on question whether he would be justified in taking office supposing that within next few days he received an assurance that a substantial sum would be forthcoming on account of arrears of royalty due by Anglo-Persian Oil Company (see my telegram No. 729).³

This morning he has sent me message to say that he will wait till 10th November for this assurance and I have begged him in reply not to be too rigid about date.

(? If) in the end he declines to form Government, it will be necessary to seek Prime Minister willing to risk hostility which would be aroused by touching loan without consent of Medjliss.

Such a man could doubtless be found but he would certainly be unsatisfactory in other ways and unlikely to be able long to maintain himself in power.

In the meantime interregnum is having usual bad effect.

Great danger has disappeared with departure yesterday of Colonel Starosselski but it is impossible to remove at once all the Russian officers, and while they remain their intrigues may always cause trouble in absence of Government, which also encourages native malcontents of all parties.

There is also some risk of bread riots on account of difficulty of paying farmers who bring grain for deposit in Government granaries. Normally Imperial Bank of Persia would advance necessary sums against gradual repayment from price obtained for grain when sold to bakers later on, but Chief Manager is naturally unwilling to lend money at a moment when instability of situation prejudices chance of reimbursement.

There is also much uneasiness owing to failure of British forces to enter

¹ This telegram was drafted on Nov. 7.

² No. 576.

³ Of. Nov. 6, not printed.

Resht which is now believed by many to be free from enemy and could, in any case, easily be retaken. Mercantile community who are interested in large stocks of goods there are especially disturbed at this.

It is realised that Cossack Division, now a mere mob, will long be incapable, either with or without its Russian officers, of active operations even if it is possible ever to re-organise it, which is doubtful. In the circumstances Persians look to us to take over duty of recovering Gilan for them and our hesitation in doing so is destroying confidence in our good faith.

When new General Officer Commanding Norperforce arrived, he believed himself to be free from restrictions which hampered military operations of his predecessor, and I had therefore no hesitation in conveying from him to Shah and Sipahdar an assurance that British troops would temporarily assume task of Cossacks.

On October 31st, however, I learned from General Ironside that he had been forbidden by War Office to advance beyond Menjil,⁴ which has placed both him and me in difficult position.

In hope that General Ironside may be able to obtain withdrawal of this prohibition, for which he has asked, I have so far refrained from disclosing to Sipahdar the true situation, which, however, it will be impossible indefinitely to conceal and revelation of which will be very damaging to our reputation.

Thus at a moment when we ought to be completely masters of the situation here we find ourselves prevented from taking full advantage of our position.

Repeated to Bagdad No. 349 for transmission to General Officer Commanding, copy to General Ironside. Sent to India.

⁴ Lord Curzon took this up in a private letter of Nov. 10th to Mr. Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for War, who replied in a letter of the 17th (not printed) that these instructions had been cancelled by a telegram of Nov. 2 which 'clearly gives Ironside sufficient latitude to undertake any local operations which he may find it necessary to carry out in order to safeguard his troops throughout the winter.' This information was conveyed to Mr. Norman in Foreign Office telegram No. 558 of Nov. 18, not printed.

No. 579

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 536 Telegraphic [E 13385/20/44]

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 8, 1920, 7 p.m.

Your telegram 707 (of 26th October:¹ American interest in oil in North Persia).

Your telegram 581 (of August 18th) reported reply of late Persian Government to United States Government when question of concession was raised.² Present moment does not appear to me very opportune for raising this somewhat difficult question and perhaps you may find it possible to suggest to Mr. Engert to postpone any representations to the Persian Government in the matter until the Medjlis shall have actually met. As United States Minister has not raised matter, you need not broach it to him.

¹ No. 568.

² No. 541.

The whole of this matter will require extremely delicate handling as the Republican victory in America³ may be expected to strengthen considerably the Standard Oil Company.

³ The presidential election held in the U.S.A. on Nov. 2 had resulted in a victory for the Republican candidate, Senator Harding.

No. 580

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 544 Telegraphic [C 10696/56/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 11, 1920, 6 p.m.*

In spite of local political difficulties explained in your telegram No. 730 of 8th November,¹ His Majesty's Government must adhere to decision announced in my telegram No. 532, paragraph 2, that Persian Government must find relief in other quarters.² They are prepared to approve proposed extension of lien of Imperial Bank for four and a half months for general purposes of Persian Government, and I am so informing the Imperial Bank of Persia.

I cannot, however, approach Treasury or bank for extension of lien for the other two and a half months urged in your telegram No. 723 of 4th November³ for purposes of paying and indemnifying Russian Cossack officers whose arrears of pay have apparently been embezzled.

Seeing that General Starosselsky manned Cossack division on a contract basis, it might be appropriate to urge Persian Government to place a mortgage on his personal effects and prohibit their export until question of his peculations has been examined and possibility of reimbursement from his effects has been considered.

¹ No. 578.

² No. 576.

³ Not printed. Cf. No. 575, n. 2.

No. 581

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 552 Telegraphic [C 11369/56/34]

Most urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 16, 1920, 12.10 p.m.*

Sunday newspaper¹ published statement 14th November that all British troops are being immediately withdrawn from Persia.

Reuters were requested not to telegraph to Teheran this unfounded report but it had already been sent.

You should inform Sipahdar that report was unauthorised and untrue. You are however fully acquainted with views of His Majesty's Government concerning policy of withdrawal.²

¹ *The Sunday Pictorial*.

² See 134 *H. C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 1359-60 for a statement on this policy made by the Prime Minister on Nov. 11.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 19, 11.15 a.m.)

No. 751 Telegraphic [C 11692/82/34]

Urgent

TEHRAN, November 18, 1920, 1.30 p.m.

Mr. Harmsworth's reply to Major Ormsby Gore's question in Parliament on November 9th¹ was telegraphed here by Reuter but unluckily escaped my notice when I was censoring telegrams so that passage stating 'only a fraction of loan of £2,000,000 provided in Anglo-Persian Agreement has hitherto been advanced to Persian Government' has appeared in the press.

Prime Minister who, though he was member of Cabinet of Vossugh ed Dowleh when the latter, Nusret ed Dowleh and Sarem ed Dowleh took £250,000² out of the loan, appears not to have known of the transaction, begged me yesterday at once to issue official denial.

I explained to him this was impossible because statement was true and suggested that he himself should make a communication to the press to the effect that a sum had been deducted from the loan for commissions and to defray expenses of underwriting.

Today he sent to say that he could not accept this solution and submitted statement which he proposed to publish declaring that money had been given to Vossugh ed Dowleh and that as it had never been paid into any government account transaction must be regarded as personal concern of the latter.

I deprecated recourse to personalities and finally persuaded Prime Minister only to say that present government have no knowledge of the transaction and are making enquiries about it with a view to issuing a further statement later.

Late Prime Minister would prefer to make no statement but feels that if his successor issued one he must do the same. He has promised however merely to say that his government did not use loan and knew nothing of the affair. I told him of it confidentially and he imparted information to only two of his colleagues.

Prime Minister is indignant with the three delinquents and talks of insisting on their making restitution or sequestrating their property in order to secure it.

As I have already observed this transaction was in any case bound to become known as soon as Anglo-Persian agreement was presented to Medjliss. Its premature revelation does not therefore make much difference.

Have His Majesty's Government any suggestion to make or wishes to express regarding wording of Prime Minister's proposed supplementary statement?

All three Ministers implicated might again be useful to us in future but if their complicity in this transaction were officially admitted I fear that in

¹ See 134 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 969-70.

² Mr. Churchill noted here 'the sum was £131,000, odd. G.P.C.' Cf. Vol. IV, Nos. 720 and 721.

spite of low standard of honesty expected of public men in Persia they would remain discredited for many years while His Majesty's Government themselves would suffer in reputation because accusation already constantly repeated, that they bought Vossugh's cabinet, would be substantiated.

Awkward questions may also be asked in Parliament at home.

It is therefore worth considering whether it would not be advisable to make up loan to original sum while allowing Prime Minister to announce that since the fact that it is not complete appears to have caused some dissatisfaction in Persia His Majesty's Government have decided not to insist on deduction from it of fraction which it had been necessary to use to defray certain incidental expenses.

Copy by Bag.

No. 583

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 21, 2 p.m.)

*No. 754 Telegraphic [C 11774/82/34]**

TEHRAN, November 19, 1920, 11.5 a.m.¹

My telegram No. 751.²

Imperial Bank of Persia have supplied me with following particulars of transaction:—

Amount paid was 400,000 tomans, and equivalent in sterling 131,147*l.* 11*s.* —and not 250,000*l.* as I had been told.

On 11th August, 1919, 10,000,³ and on 13th August 90,000, tomans were handed to Sarem-ed-Dowleh in cash by the then chief manager of bank.

On 19th September, 1919, balance of 200,000 tomans was credited to Vossugh-ed-Dowleh and a credit note sent to him.

Bank hold no receipt for any of these payments.

(Copy to Bagdad by despatch.)

¹ This telegram was drafted on Nov. 18.

² No. 582.

³ This figure read '110,000' in the text as sent from Tehran.

No. 584

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 560 Telegraphic [C 10901/267/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 19, 1920, 6 p.m.

Parliamentary position and more particularly financial considerations render it necessary for us to scrutinise very carefully expenditure now being incurred or likely to be incurred on Military forces in Persia. I allude particularly to South Persia Rifles and Cossack division. British expenditure on former, which is in any case inordinately heavy and is on higher scale per man than even Cossack Division under Russian Officers, has been continued during the past year, not from any desire on our part, but from failure of Persian Government to submit Agreement to Mejilis, and thereby to

bring into being the Persian National Army of which the South Persia Rifles were to be one of the principal units. Financial sanction has been given for maintenance of this force until end of this calendar year, when cost will fall upon Persian Government, unless Agreement has been accepted in interval, in which case matter will have to be discussed between the two Governments. In any case both the strength of the force and the outlay upon it seem quite disproportionately high, and, whoever is made responsible, ought to be very considerably reduced.

Necessity for such reduction becomes more urgent when case of Cossack Division is considered. It was never contemplated by us that rascality and consequent dismissal of Russian officers should be regarded as justifying transfer of entire cost of this force, as to value of which you have expressed yourself with no ambiguity, to our shoulders; and I regret if any language of mine can have given you this impression. What I meant to convey was that whereas British had contributed to this force up to May last but had then desisted from doing so, we would, taking your advice into consideration, be willing to make a renewed contribution for the time being in order to aid the British officers, selected by General Ironside and yourself, in its reorganisation, subject of course to ultimate repayment by Persian Government: on June 19th last (*vide* my telegram No. 327)¹ we referred to Persian Government's contribution of 60,000 tomans per month and suggested that the entire force might be reduced to that level. This is provisional contribution that we are now willing to make under the new conditions. Balance must be found by Persian Government.

Your estimate of value of this force leads us to believe that nothing would be lost, and probably, under British officers, a good deal gained by reduction of its numbers, and consequent saving of expenditure, and we commend this point of view both to Persian Government and to officers responsible for reorganisation. It would seem indeed that the two problems, that of South Persia Rifles and of Cossack Division, should be considered as part of same question, and that so long as His Majesty's Government continue to accept any financial responsibility for both, a saving on the less important of the two forces, i.e., the Rifles, would render it easier for us to justify acceptance of provisional expenditure on the other.

Repeated to India.

¹ No. 471.

No. 585

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 565 Telegraphic [C 11774/82/34]**

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 22, 1920, 2 p.m.

Your telegram No. 751 of 18th November¹ and your telegram No. 754 of 18th November giving correct amount paid.²

This phase of the agreement was, as you know, extremely repugnant to

¹ No. 582.

² No. 583.

me, and I only gave way on the urgent and repeated insistence of Sir P. Cox. In his telegram No. 546 of 15th August, 1919, a letter written by the then Minister of Finance was quoted accepting sum as a first instalment of the loan.³ Present Prime Minister was at that time a member of the Cabinet and continued in that office for eight months afterwards. We must therefore hold him jointly responsible with his colleagues for the official act of that Cabinet, and you should speak to him very strongly in this sense.

We can on no account consider the suggestion made in the penultimate paragraph of first of your above-mentioned telegrams.

³ Vol. IV, No. 721.

No. 586

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 26, 12.15 p.m.)

No. 765 Telegraphic [C 12323/267/34]

TEHRAN, November 25, 1920, 11.50 a.m.

Your telegram No. 560.¹

Paragraph 4 of your telegram No. 532² certainly led me to suppose that His Majesty's Government were prepared to assume whole cost of reorganisation of Cossack Division for words do not appear to me to be susceptible of any other interpretation and when the Persian Government learn that this is not the case I cannot blame them if they accuse me of a breach of faith.

In the meantime General Officer Commanding Norperforce and General Dickson have reached conclusion that Russian officers have reduced it to such a state of indiscipline and inefficiency that it would be much harder to rid officers and men of their bad habits than to form a complete new force from better elements of division and Central Brigade.

Accordingly, immediately after new Government had been formed General Dickson, the Military Attaché, and I put military situation plainly before Sipahdar and Minister of War.

We showed that for financial and parliamentary reasons and owing to pressure of public opinion it was useless to hope that British troops would remain in Persia for many months longer and pointed out necessity of beginning at once to form a force which would be fit to take their place by the time of their withdrawal. If this measure were delayed till the Medjliss had passed Anglo-Persian agreement organisation of this force would not by that date have made sufficient progress to enable it to defend the country against a renewed Bolshevik invasion next year. Unless unexpected developments took place such an invasion was certain and in absence of such a force must be followed by total ruin of Persia. Work must therefore be undertaken at once on following lines:—

1. British officers to be in executive command, and
2. To have complete financial control:

¹ No. 584.

² The reference is to para. 3 of No. 576.

3. Authority of Ministry of War over force to be subject to above conditions:

4. Work to be carried on near Kasvin so as to avoid arousing popular opposition.

5. Persian officers and men from division and Central Brigade not chosen for new force to be incorporated in Central Brigade which should be under Minister of War.

6. All available arms and ammunition and equipment to be put at disposal of new force.

It would have to be made clear that formation of force, to expenses of which His Majesty's Government would contribute, was an indisputable measure of defence independent of agreement.

If it was seen that Persian Government after 15 months inaction were at last taking steps to assure defence of the country it might be possible to induce His Majesty's Government to leave British troops here till new force was ready to take over task which they were now fulfilling. Otherwise their withdrawal was certain as soon as climatic conditions permitted.

Prime Minister promised to submit these proposals to Cabinet and a day later informed me latter though convinced of the necessity of step were unwilling at once to take a measure which would certainly arouse widespread disapproval and possibly even cause disorders and which would jeopardise fate of agreement in Medjliss. He suggested suspending action for a fortnight in order to give Government time to explain and justify their proposed action.

I felt that to yield upon this point would afford an opportunity for hesitation and indefinite delay and give to timid and ill-disposed time to influence Government against accepting proposal.

Yesterday therefore in presence of General Officer Commanding Norperforce and Military Attaché I presented to Prime Minister and Ministry of War a friendly ultimatum begging them at the same time to have courage to save the country in spite of clamorous agitators, extremists and interested persons.

Prime Minister asked me to explain whole situation in its political and military aspects in a letter which he would show to the Shah, to his colleagues and to a meeting of notables which His Majesty would summon with a view to obtain their support.

This I at once did³ and expect a reply in a few days. It was hoped that if work were at once begun on it the new force might amount to about 7,000 by the Spring, but it is calculated that 60,000 Tomans a month will not suffice to maintain more than about 2,000 and that only if arms &c. mentioned above are obtained. This number is of course far too small for purpose

³ Mr. Norman's note of Nov. 21, copy of which was forwarded to the Foreign Office under cover of his despatch No. 177 of Dec. 16 (received Feb. 25, 1921), was 'addressed to the Persian Prime Minister at his own request, recommending the Persian Government to lose no time in forming a force under British officers, independently of the Anglo-Persian Agreement, so that, after the withdrawal of the North Persia Force in the spring, the country might not be left entirely without defence against aggression from without'.

for which it is intended. As regards South Persia Rifles it is not really case that they cost more per man than Cossack Division for number actually serving in latter was not much more than half of that appearing on pay roll, the pay drawn for balance of men being appropriated by their officers: a practice very usual in this country. The sum of 160,000 Tomans moreover represents only ordinary monthly budget of the division exclusive of very considerable allowances paid when it was on active service and in certain other circumstances.

I regret that I dare hold out no hope that Medjliss will pronounce its verdict on agreement before end of the year.

I assure your Lordship that His Majesty's Government greatly underrate the difficulty of opening that Assembly. From early in August till their fall the late Government made every effort to expedite elections and present Cabinet has done the same ever since it took office but dilatoriness of provincial authorities is incorrigible, deputies already at Tehran are continually slipping away and those already elected elsewhere simply decline to start for the capital. If these latter are made to resign it will only cause further delay by necessitating new elections.

Further, manner in which present elections are being conducted is in many cases so scandalous that Commissioners have had to be sent to hold enquiries. It is entirely beyond power of Government or my own to remedy this state of things.

In the circumstances and seeing that Persian Government are and for many months to come will continue to be unable to find money to maintain South Persia Rifles, the dissolution of that very efficient force early next year appears inevitable. All the work which its officers have devoted to it will thus have been thrown away while in its absence anarchy will quickly prevail throughout Southern Persia.

Without presuming to question necessity from a financial point of view of decision reached by His Majesty's Government I confess that to learn of it for the first time within five weeks of date on which it is to take effect adds so much to difficulties of situation here which already appear insurmountable as to reduce me to despair.⁴

Addressed to India. Copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

⁴ Lord Curzon commented: 'Mr. Norman and we are now beginning to reap the fruit of his policy.'

No. 587

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 27, 3.25 p.m.)

No. 767 Telegraphic [C 12333/82/34]

Your telegram No. 565.¹

TEHRAN, November 25, 1920, 11.55 a.m.

I have spoken to Prime Minister as instructed.

He repeated that he knew nothing of transaction at the time and I feel sure that he was speaking the truth.

¹ No. 585.

He said also that as money was never paid into Treasury Government could not be expected to accept contention that they had received it as a first instalment of loan.

He asked me for a copy of letter of the then Minister of Finance and I feel that I cannot refuse to give him this.

He proposes trying to recover money from the three persons who received it and begs that as His Majesty's Government know in reality even if not officially the purpose for which it was used they will give him what support they can in his efforts to arrive at a settlement of question.

I pointed out that His Majesty's Government did not know any more than he did of what² had become of the money.

I shall suggest to Prime Minister that in view of the present necessity for solving far more important questions this one is likely to be forgotten for the moment and that it would be an advantage to Government that this should happen. He would therefore do well to postpone any active steps which he may think it necessary to take in the matter.³

Copy to Bagdad.

² The text as sent read: 'he did what'.

³ In his telegram No. 576 of Nov. 30 (not printed) Lord Curzon approved Mr. Norman's proposed advice.

No. 588

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received November 27, 2.25 p.m.)

No. 766 Telegraphic [C 12332/82/34]

TEHRAN, November 25, 1920, 9.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 754.¹

One of our best friends in Medjliss told me yesterday² that all deputies favourable to Anglo-Persian Agreement are much distressed at revelation of fact that money has been given to Vossouk-ed-Dowleh out of loan of £2,000,000 of which they themselves were previously unaware since anybody who supports agreement in Medjliss will now be accused of having received share of that sum while opposition can say with truth that this charge against Vossouk-ed-Dowleh of having been bribed by His Majesty's Government to sign the agreement has been proved true.

He asked whether it would not be possible for Reuter to telegraph a statement to the effect that Harmsworth's answer in Parliament³ was based on a misapprehension and that loan is intact. He and his colleague regard this resolution as the only one capable of removing deplorable impression produced which must otherwise gravely prejudice chances of agreement in Medjliss.

I said that if His Majesty's Government were willing to make up loan to its original amount they might perhaps also consent to adopt course proposed.

Copy to Bagdad by despatch.

¹ No. 583.

² i.e. Nov. 22; this telegram was drafted on Nov. 23.

³ See No. 582, n. 1.

No. 589

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 572 Telegraphic [C 12323/267/34]

Secret. Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, November 26, 1920, 10.30 p.m.

Information has reached me from a reliable source that Mushaver-ul-Mamalek,¹ who is now in Moscow, is endeavouring to conclude an agreement with the Soviet Government on following lines.

A. Non-interference in internal affairs. Cancellation of all Russian loans to Persia and non-interference by Russia in connected undertakings. Cancellation of all concessions to Russian Government or subjects and of all treaties and arrangements subsequent to 1828 treaty² which is already considered cancelled and also of all treaties between Russia and other Powers relating to Persia.

B. Surrender to Persia of Russian Bank; Enzeli-Tehran-Hamadan road; Julfa-Tabriz railway; Seistan-Astrabad telegraph line; postal, telegraphic and telephone establishments; and Enzeli harbour.

C. Exchange of Diplomatic and Consular representatives; latter to have no judicial functions.

D. Commercial, Customs tariff, postal and telegraphic agreements and supply of Persian goods against Russian commodities and gold. Freedom of travel and free transit of goods and persons through respective territories.

E. Immunity from forced labour and Military Service. Protection of property. Local fiscal laws to apply to respective subjects.

F. Equal navigation rights in Caspian to be followed by separate arrangement for harbours.

Without divulging fact that above information has reached you from this office you can intimate to Persian Government that you hear an agreement is being negotiated with Soviet Government covering more important of above points and that you are naturally interested in these negotiations if correctly reported and will be glad to hear how they are proceeding.

¹ See No. 562.

² See No. 521, n. 5.

No. 590

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 1, 11.40 a.m.)

No. 772 Telegraphic [C 12684/56/34]

Your telegram No. 572.¹

TEHRAN, November 29, 1920, 11 a.m.

Please see my telegram 770² which has crossed it.

I have not yet had an opportunity of discussing question with Prime

¹ No. 589.

² Of Nov. 27, not printed. In this Mr. Norman referred to 'a telegram No. 35 of November 8th despatched from Moscow by Mushaver-ul-Mamalek through Persian Legation in London regarding demands made by Soviet Government on Persian Government, and terms which he has proposed to former for a Treaty between the two'. A translation of this telegram was received in the Foreign Office on Feb. 17, 1921, as enclosure in Tehran despatch No. 174 of Dec. 10, 1920, not printed.

Minister so must still postpone detailed observations, but in the meantime acting Minister for Foreign Affairs has told me all feel it necessary to at once reply regarding point raised in first paragraph of Mushaver-ul-Mamalek's telegram.³

They propose saying that if Russian Soviet Government will give an absolute guarantee that all Bolshevik troops will be at once withdrawn from Resht and Enzeli, Persian Government on their part will induce His Majesty's Government to order British troops not to advance beyond Menjil.

I said that I did not suppose His Majesty's Government would object to this reply, but pointed out that Russian Soviet Government could not really fear attack by British troops on Azerbaijan because they must know that there were no ships in which latter could be transported thither. I added that no reliance could be placed on any guarantee offered by Russian Soviet Government.

Proposed reply would be in accordance with policy of War Office as I understand it, and would not give rise to any objection on the part of General Officer Commanding Norperforce who, even if Bolshevik troops leave Resht and Enzeli, does not propose to occupy either place with a British force.

If Russian Soviet Government failed to carry out their undertaking a (? new) British advance from Menjil would always be possible.

Present state of negotiations between His Majesty's Government and Russian Government of which I am ignorant may make it feasible for the former to give the latter at the same time a direct assurance that British troops will not attack Azerbaijan.

Sent to India, copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

³ This paragraph (in translation) read: 'I have negotiated with the Foreign Office about the affairs. With reference to the withdrawal of the forces; their fear is chiefly that the British troops may occupy Enzeli and threaten Azerbaijan. Although they now state that evacuation of Enzeli depends on the evacuation of Persia by the English troops I think that if I promise, pending the receipt of instructions, that foreign troops will not advance from Manjil on Enzeli there will be no harm.'

No. 591

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 4, 12.10 p.m.)

No. 778 Telegraphic [C 12941/267/34]

TEHRAN, December 1, 1920, 11.10 a.m.

My telegram No. 765.¹

Assembly of notables met November 27th. Shah opened proceedings with a short account of dangers of situation and an appeal to Assembly to pronounce opinion regarding course to be adopted. He then left and Prime Minister gave a more detailed explanation.

On demand of some clerics present my note was then read and a member of the same Party emphasised the importance of maintaining neutrality

¹ No. 586.

between Great Britain and Bolsheviks. Prime Minister thereupon observed that in order to preserve one's neutrality one must be in a position to defend it, which Persia was not.

Various other clerics and deputies also spoke and general sense of meeting was that Assembly was incompetent to pronounce on so important a question as formation of a Persian force under British officers, which could only be decided by Medjliss, and that it was therefore imperative to summon that body with as little delay as possible.

Fuller account of proceedings will be found in Military Attaché's telegram C. 471 November 29th to War Office.²

Though deliberations of the Assembly did not result in acceptance of my advice which indeed nobody appears to have expected, they had at least the good effect of convincing everybody present of the importance of opening Medjliss immediately to which there had previously been considerable opposition on the part of extremists hostile to Anglo-Persian Agreement. Position of Government is moreover now rather stronger than before because no attack was made on them during the course of Debate.

Our own attitude too has been publicly explained so that if His Majesty's Government finally decide to withdraw British force in the Spring no Persian will be able to say that they have done so without warning, that they have not offered their help in supplying the only possible means of providing a substitute for it in good time or that they have not pointed out probable consequences of a failure to follow their advice.

It is perhaps lucky from one point of view that that advice was rejected for had it been taken I should have found myself in difficult position of having to admit that His Majesty's Government had withdrawn their offer to bear expenses of organising and maintaining proposed Force.

It is noteworthy that though all the most prominent opponents of British policy were present at the meeting, some of whom delivered speeches, not a word was said against Great Britain or the agreement.

Copy Bagdad and Kasvin: Sent to India.

² Not printed.

No. 592

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 3, 10 p.m.)

*No. 779 Telegraphic [C 12895/56/34]**

TEHRAN, December 1, 1920, 5.20 p.m.

In view of Armenian defeats¹ and . . .² Bolshevik threat to Azerbaijan, European consuls and colonies at Tabriz propose to evacuate town, and I have authorised His Majesty's consul to do so as soon as he thinks it necessary. Imperial Bank of Persia at Tabriz has already closed.

¹ See Vol. XII, Nos. 615-16 and 634.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'Turco-'.

General Ironsides [Ironsides] is convinced that Bolsheviks and Turks are acting in conjunction, and believes invasion of Azerbaijan by one or both of them may occur this winter. He considers this to be by far the most serious danger threatening or likely to threaten Persia and is therefore sending ammunition to Shamsevens³ and a British officer to Tabriz to co-ordinate any opposition which they or other Persian forces may be able to offer to invaders.

(Sent to India; copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.)

³ The text as sent from Tehran read: 'the Shahsevens', i.e. the once numerous Shah Savan tribes of Persian Azerbaijan.

No. 593

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 578 Telegraphic [C 12687/82/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 1, 1920, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 766 (of 25th November).¹

Voussough-ed-Dowleh² has received from Sipahdar a telegram accusing him of having received £250,000 on conclusion of Agreement, and has replied that any such sum could only have been in connection with arms etc.

His Highness has, however, requested that you should be informed that sum paid by Sir P. Cox on conclusion of Agreement was advanced at instigation of Sarem-ed-Dowleh and Prince Firouz who each received 100,000 tomans: the remainder was placed at His Highness' own disposal by Sarem-ed-Dowleh but was not touched as Vossough was opposed to the procedure.

Subsequently His Highness used the remaining sum of tomans 200,000 to help Tomanianz but firm nevertheless became bankrupt. His Highness received from firm title deeds of lands in North Persia as security and is prepared to hand these over to you or *à qui de droit* or to repay that sum on his return.

In any case he wishes Sipahdar to be enlightened that it was never question of £250,000. See your telegram No. 751 of November 17th³ and your correction in 754 of 18th November.⁴

¹ No. 588.

² At this time in England.

³ No. 582.

⁴ No. 583.

No. 594

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 5, 1.30 p.m.)

No. 781 Telegraphic [C 12949/82/34]

Confidential

TEHRAN, December 2, 1920, 11.10 a.m.

Prime Minister asked me yesterday¹ somewhat pointedly whether His Majesty's Government were still really very anxious that Anglo-Persian Agreement should be accepted by Medjliss.

¹ This telegram was drafted on Dec. 1.

Though I myself am not sure that their views on this subject have not lately undergone some modification, I replied that all the communications which I had received from Your Lordship indicated that they attached undiminished importance to the matter.

Prime Minister then said that the numerous conversations which he had had within the last few days with the clerics and deputies had convinced him that not one of these people cared in the least for the welfare of his country or indeed for anything but money and that therefore the only way he could (? overthrow)² opposition to Agreement was to buy support for it. British interests in Persia were so important that His Majesty's Government could not afford to sacrifice them in order to save a little money. He could not for the moment indicate the exact sum which would be required. It might be nearly £100,000 but might be a good deal less. He would let me know later when sending me names of people whom it would be necessary to corrupt and could absolutely guarantee that if money, which would have to be a gift and not a loan, were forthcoming, Agreement would pass. He himself did not wish to have anything to do with actual distribution of bribes.

I said that in adopting their present attitude as defined in Your Lordship's recent speech in the House of Lords³ and in my note which, though drafted before I had had opportunity of reading the speech, was on precisely the same lines,⁴ His Majesty's Government had taken into account the possibility that British interests in Persia might have to be sacrificed and even if they were willing to provide required sum, they could not do so because, while amount at their disposal for secret service was not on a scale sufficient to permit of its inclusion therein, item could not figure in any other vote. I asked, moreover, how, even if money were given, it was possible for Prime Minister absolutely to guarantee result since unforeseen circumstances might force Government to resign in spite of my support before Medjliss met or that . . .⁵ might itself bring about their fall by refusing them vote of confidence. If money was really required, I could only suggest that Anglo-Persian Oil Company might be induced to provide it in return for some privilege which they might desire and that agent of Persian Government (? with) Company should be instructed to sound them on the subject.

I have pointed out to Prime Minister that if money is obtained, none of it should be paid out till Agreement has actually been passed, persons to be bribed receiving in the meantime, if necessary, promissory notes on Imperial Bank of Persia for the sums due to them. Chief Manager says this is a feasible arrangement.

Chief Manager shares Prime Minister's opinion and thinks that it would be well worth the while of the Bank itself to spend as much as £250,000 to save its interests in Persia, elimination of which would completely ruin it.

Sent to India and (? copy) Baghdad.

² The text as sent read: 'the only way of overthrowing'.

³ On Nov. 16; see 42 *H.L. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 276-91.

⁴ See No. 586.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'body'.

No. 595

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 3, 10.10 a.m.)

No. 785 Telegraphic [C 12838/56/34]

Clear the line

TEHRAN, December 2, 1920, 2 p.m.

My telegram 780.¹

I was continually pressed by late Government and have also been by present Government to obtain from Imperial Bank of Persia an advance of about 200,000 tomans secured on grain in Government store-houses in order to enable payment to be made to peasants for their grain when they bring it to the Capital. Unless paid on the spot they will not deliver it, population will not be fed and bread riots will probably ensue.

Advance would be repayed [*sic*] within a few months out of money obtained by Government by sale of grain to bakers.

Bank has been in the habit of making advances on this account but for various reasons chief manager cannot see his way to do so this year.

Government have also constantly urged me to induce bank to grant them a monthly credit of 30,000 tomans for three or four months to relieve the wants of refugees from Gilan who have fled before Bolsheviki and of whom about 10,000 are now here. Many of them are well off, and will repay to Government sums advanced to them as soon as they recover their property. Chief Manager, however, has felt obliged to refuse this request.

In these circumstances I can think of no way of obtaining money for these two objects which is really most urgently required otherwise than by increasing proposed loan of two million tomans to one of two million five hundred thousand.

I have made this suggestion to Government who have accepted it and begged me to submit it to His Majesty's Government.

I trust that it may be possible to act on it at once.

Government assure me that political value to us of relieving refugees in this way will be very great.

¹ Of Dec. 1, not printed. In this telegram Mr. Norman had reported the Persian Government's request for a loan of the sterling equivalent of 2 million tomans, out of which they required an immediate advance of 500,000 tomans.

No. 596

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 580 Telegraphic [C 12701/56/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, December 3, 1920, 12.25 p.m.

Your telegram No. 780 of 1st December.¹

Financial Adviser saw Board of Directors of Bank to-day, who readily agreed to advance forthwith sterling equivalent of 500,000 tomans on conditions set forth in his formula.²

¹ See No. 595, n. 1.

² The formula was set out in Lord Curzon's telegram No. 562 of Nov. 20, not printed.

Financial Adviser begs for a few days' postponement of the question of the larger advance asked for, as his negotiations with the oil company are nearing conclusion. He is earnestly striving for a settlement favourable to the Persian Government not only in respect of the past, but also for the future, and the results of his efforts may have a material bearing on the amount which the Government may desire to borrow.

This stated that the Financial Adviser thought it 'impossible to raise any loan on a security the amount of which is in dispute and the date of payment of which is conjectural. He therefore suggested the formula: "Borrow on security of next payments hereafter to be made by the company to the Government in respect of royalty".' The security in dispute was the sum due on account of arrears of royalties from the Anglo-Persian Oil Co. For these arrears, see Nos. 554, 558, 563, and 571.

No. 597

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 7, 5 p.m.)

No. 790 Telegraphic [C 13221/82/34]

TEHRAN, December 5, 1920, 11 a.m.

My telegram No. 765.¹

Government are still making every effort to hasten opening of Medjliss and among other steps which they have taken with this object have informed all deputies who are officials that whether they take their seats or not they will be dismissed from their posts so that it may not be worth their while to resign the former in order to retain the latter.

To illustrate difficulties with which Government have to contend I may mention that some of the deputies of Fars have categorically declined to start for Tehran so that either their constituencies must remain unrepresented and formation of quorum be postponed or else they must be made to resign and further delay result from necessity of holding new elections.

Two of the deputies of Khorassan after receiving four telegrams ordering them to start have resigned their seats rather than obey alleging that they are ill and that it is too cold to travel.

Sent to India. Copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

¹ No. 586.

No. 598

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 6, 3.20 p.m.)

No. 792 Telegraphic [C 13124/56/34]

TEHRAN, December 5, 1920, 5.50 p.m.

Prime Minister has communicated to me two telegrams from Governor General of Azerbaijan.

First repeats a telegram from Khan Maku reporting that one Valibegov described as civil agent of Bolsheviks and Turks has asked him whether he is friendly to Soviet Government and will co-operate with them and supply

them everything required, why Persian Government who call themselves neutral will not allow Bolshevik troops to enter Persia but do not prevent British troops from remaining there and whether Persian Government will trade with Soviet Government and allow Soviet troops to pass through Persia and Azerbaijan to join Turks using railway from Shahtakhti.

Valibegov said that Persian Government should make an alliance with Soviet Government and turn British out of Persia and that Bolsheviks will turn them out of Turkey. Soviet Government would give Persian Government any amount of war material for this purpose. If latter fail to help Bolsheviks the latter will be obliged to enter Turkish territory through Persia all the same. Governor General anticipating that Valibegov will hold similar language to him, asks what reply he should return.

I am advising Prime Minister to instruct him if similarly approached to point out that Bolshevik troops are in fact already in Persia and are plundering the country which British troops are on the contrary defending.

He should refuse requests for assistance and point out that negotiations are in progress between Persia and Soviet Governments with a view to settle all differences. He should ask why Bolsheviks are attacking British, with whom they are about to conclude if they have not already concluded a Commercial Agreement. He might also ask what Turkish Government Valibegov professes to represent. I am further recommending Persian Government to protest to Soviet Government against action which Valibegov is taking at a time when negotiations are going on between the two.

In second telegram Governor General asks in view of Turkish Nationalist threat to Azerbaijan what attitude he shall adopt towards representatives of Mustapha Kemal Pasha pointing out that it is necessary either to come to terms with them or else to repel them by force.

As Persian Government are not in a position themselves to take the latter course and we cannot take it on their behalf, it seems that we cannot logically object to their taking the former and I am accordingly suggesting that Governor General should be allowed to enter into discussion with Turks ostensibly on his own responsibility.

Governor General adds that from indications in his possession it is clear that Turks intend after occupying Armenia to check influx of Bolsheviks and observes that, in view of this intention, relations with the former are necessary.

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs has further informed me that Bolsheviks have expressed intention of sending workmen into Persian territory to repair Julfa-Tabriz railway.

Sent to India. Copy to Bagdad and Norperforce.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 7, 11.15 p.m.)

No. 793 Telegraphic [C 13222/267/34]

Clear the line

TEHRAN, December 7, 1920, 10.50 a.m.

My telegram No. 700, third paragraph.¹

Seyyid Zia-ed-Din Tabatabai and Sirdar Muazzam on December 4th asked Prime Minister what reply Government proposed to give to my note.²

He showed them draft of proposed answer which amounted to a polite refusal to accept my advice.

They therefore told him that his timidity would ruin Persia and finally after long discussions induced him to change his mind and to promise to address to me a note stating that Persian Government accept my recommendation for (? immediate) formation of a Persian force under (? British officers) to be engaged to begin (? as such) on a year's contract independently of Anglo-Persian Agreement but as they consider 7,000 too small a number of men to ensure defence of the country, they wish to enlist 15,000. Force would be under Ministry of War but its control would be purely nominal.

They will also express desire to reorganise gendarmerie and police and to introduce into them some British officers to work with Swedes and they will propose to bring some of South Persia Rifles to Tehran and to amalgamate them with gendarmerie.

They will also ask His Majesty's Government to advance money required to finance scheme for a year which they calculate would amount to £1,000,000 and to provide necessary arms and equipment.

Seyyid Zia-ed-Din unfolded this plan to me on behalf of Prime Minister yesterday and pointed out that as His Majesty's Government had already offered to advance money for organisation of smaller force previously proposed they ought not to refuse to provide it for increased number which it was not³ desired to raise.

I realise of course that as His Majesty's Government have now withdrawn offer referred to (a fact of which seeing that Persian Government had practically decided to reject my advice I had not thought it necessary to inform them) I cannot expect them themselves to provide a sum at all nearly sufficient for the purpose indicated, but at the same time I feel very strongly that they cannot afford to neglect unique opportunity now presented of putting immediately in force without appearing to do so most important part of agreement which could hardly fail to be followed within a short time by adoption of the rest. Indeed, Seyyid Zia-ed-Din has already spoken of invoking aid of financial experts still here controlling expenditure of this money.

In order, however, to avoid delay in putting plan into operation, it is

¹ The reference should be to Tehran telegram No. 765, i.e. No. 586 above.

² See No. 586, n. 3.

³ This word read 'now' in the text as sent from Tehran.

essential that Persian Government should be sure that funds will be forthcoming as they are needed.

The only way which suggests itself to me is that His Majesty's Government should provide £1,000,000 from loan of £2,000,000 without informing Persian Government of source of money; that sum thus deducted should be made good by means of private (? loan) before relevant article of agreement is considered by Medjliss.

I have no doubt from remarks already reported which Colonel Wallace⁴ made to me before his departure from Tehran that Anglo-Persian Oil Company would undertake this operation, but Financial Adviser may be able to (? propose) better solution.

Adoption of plan by Prime Minister may involve resignation of some members of the Government which Seyyid Zia-ed-Din and Sirdar Muazzam will doubtless enter.

Seyyid Zia-ed-Din must be well known to Mr. Churchill.

Sirdar Muazzam is deputy referred to in my telegram No. 766.⁵ His energy and courage led me to suggest his inclusion in Cabinet at the time of its formation and Prime Minister promised him post of Minister without portfolio, but objections raised by some of the other Ministers led to postponement of his appointment with result that a somewhat difficult situation arose, which I am now trying my best to relieve.

Proposed note will not be despatched unless and until a favourable reply to present telegram is received from your Lordship and in the meantime strict secrecy will be observed regarding plan which will not even be divulged to Cabinet.

Sent to India, copy to Bagdad, Norperforce.

⁴ Col. Wallace was the representative in Tehran of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

⁵ No. 588.

No. 600

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 10, 11.30 a.m.)

No. 797 Telegraphic [C 13466/267/34]

TEHRAN, December 8,¹ 1920, 11.30 a.m.

Your telegram No. 544 paragraph 2.²

I did not anticipate that His Majesty's Government would refuse to agree to suggestion contained in my telegram No. 723³ for provision of sum, especially after receiving explanations given in my telegram No. 741,⁴ and considering the fact that no expenditure of public funds would have been involved.

¹ This telegram was drafted on Dec. 7.

² No. 580.

³ See No. 580.

⁴ In this telegram of Nov. 12 (not printed) Mr. Norman had explained that 'only a small part' of the sum 'would be devoted to clearing off arrears of pay, because only one month's pay is due to dismissed Russian officers. By far the greater part would be used to provide compensation for dismissal and for families of four officers who have been killed.'

Therefore as money was required at once and as I felt confident that my proposal would be accepted I asked Imperial Bank of Persia to advance it, which they willingly did.

They have now asked how and when it is proposed to repay advance.

I would accordingly beg His Majesty's Government to reconsider their attitude towards my suggestion, taking into account the fact that extension of Bank's lien for four and a half months for general needs of Persian Government, which was approved in the same telegram, will not be required now that it has been decided to supply those needs by a loan on security of royalties due by Anglo-Persian Oil Company.⁵

⁵ For this loan see No. 596, n. 2.

No. 601

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 585 Telegraphic [C 12951/266/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 8, 1920, 1.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 784 of 2nd December:¹ South Persia Rifles.

Consul at Shiraz appears to regard complete disbandment of South Persia Rifles on 1st January as necessary consequence of inability of His Majesty's Government to continue present payments after end of year. On other hand, I presume that Persian Government, being desirous of maintaining some degree of order in South Persia, intend to keep at least portion of force going after that date, and I shall be glad to hear what steps are contemplated by them for this purpose.

¹ Not printed.

No. 602

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 586 Telegraphic [C 12950/56/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 8, 1920, 2.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 783 (of December 2nd).¹ Perso-Soviet negotiations).

For purposes of official and non-confidential record you will doubtless forward by first available opportunity substance of Mushaver-ul-Mamalek's telegram No. 35 of November 8th.²

As regards Treaty of Turkomanchai³ mentioned in Article 12 of draft Treaty with Soviet, it is not clear why if that Treaty were annulled new arrangement would be necessary, as our most favoured nation treatment is provided in Article 9 of Treaty of 1857,⁴ and further we can always fall back on German treaty of 1873,⁵ Article 13 of which gives very extended rights in great detail.

¹ Not printed.

² See No. 590, n. 2.

³ Cf. No. 521, n. 5, and No. 589.

⁴ The Anglo-Persian Treaty of Peace, printed in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 47, pp. 42-46.

⁵ The German-Persian Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, printed *ibid.*, vol. 63, pp. 45-51.

I do not, however, see necessity for labouring points raised by Mushaver-ul-Mamalek at this juncture, as from recent attitude of Persian Government, I doubt whether they are animated by sincere desire to fall in with wishes of His Majesty's Government. I think, therefore, that it is only necessary that you should enter an emphatic caveat that rights and interests of His Majesty's Government and British subjects cannot be exposed to infringement by any negotiations conducted by Persian Government with Soviet or other Governments: this will apply equally to cases where British firms or corporations have legally acquired from Persian subjects or Russians rights or properties, the ownership of which at the time of purchase there was no reason to call in question.

No. 603

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 587 Telegraphic [C 12838/56/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 8, 1920, 3 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 785 of 2nd December.¹

Financial tactics of Persian Government as reported in your recent telegrams appear to us to be open to gravest suspicion. Having exhausted all British official financial sources they are seeking to realise with utmost haste, before meeting of Medjliss, all available assets with Anglo-Persian Oil Company and Bank over which His Majesty's Government might exercise a restraining influence. When these resources are exhausted next plan is to raise money on various Russian concessions which they declare cancelled, and in order to confirm this cancellation they are negotiating treaty with Bolsheviks with terms of which we are fully familiar. British concessions such as Khostaria oil are being offered to foreigners and Americans are being encouraged to fish in troubled waters.² These tactics, coupled with recent refusal to allow British officers to reorganise Cossack Brigade, confirm suspicions which I have expressed in another telegram³ and lead me to think that Persian Government are heading towards certain disaster.

¹ No. 595.

² See No. 568.

³ The reference is probably to No. 602.

No. 604

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 588 Telegraphic [C 12949/82/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 8, 1920, 3.40 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 781 of 2 Dec.¹ has filled me with great surprise. I have hitherto been led to believe that Sipahdar prided his Government on repudiation of venality which he so severely condemned in some of his

¹ No. 594.

predecessors. It now appears, however, that he contemplates adoption of similar methods of securing Parliamentary support for Anglo-Persian Agreement, which we had been told that firstly Mushir-ed-Dowleh and afterwards himself had assumed Office in order to secure by honourable means.

You should emphatically dissociate yourself from any such suggestion. His Majesty's Government have always been anxious to gain Persian approval of Agreement by open and legitimate procedure, and have shown infinite patience in deferring to difficulties and scruples of Persian Government. They have taken and they still take this line quite as much out of regard for Persian as for British interests. If, however, Persia's conception of her interests is so different, and if, owing either to hostility of Medjliss or to abstention of its members for such excuses as are given in your telegram No. 790,² Persian Government are not in a position to confirm Agreement within period before named, the responsibility for future will rest exclusively with them and the support of His Majesty's Government will no longer be at their disposal.

Repeat to India.

² No. 597.

No. 605

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 8, 11.45 a.m.)

No. 794 Telegraphic [13321/267/34]

TEHRAN, December 8, 1920, 5.30 p.m.

My immediately preceding telegram.¹

Sirdar Muazzam adduces another reason in favour of immediate formation of a force which is that deputies both here and in the country [are]² already being threatened by a few terrorists and agitators with violence and even with assassination if they support agreement so that though they are really convinced of its necessity they will not dare to speak or vote in its favour and perhaps not even attend sittings unless they can feel sure that they will not suffer in consequence. To give them requisite confidence, Government must be able to protect them, and for this purpose must be able to dispose of some of force by time agreement is presented to Medjliss.

According to Sirdar Muazzam whose opinion is shared by other people with whom I have spoken this intimidation is preventing provincial deputies from starting for the Capital and may even make it impossible to form quorum.

As soon as Government have received some money and feel stronger they will arrest as many as possible of those responsible for this situation.

Sent to India, Bagdad, Norperforce.

¹ No. 599.

² This word was in the text as sent from Tehran.

No. 606

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 592 Telegraphic [C 13222/267/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 9, 1920, 10 p.m.*

Situation as described by you in your tel. No. 793¹ adds to our bewilderment and does not seem to provide any solution. First we understood that Russian Officers of Cossack Division had been dismissed, although we now hear from a confidential but authoritative source that they are still in Persian employ at Kasvin. Next, British Officers were appointed in their place, and a long correspondence ensued as to conditions of their employment. Then we were told by you that, pending meeting of Mejilis, Persian Government would not sanction their employment at all, but that it was quite likely that Mejilis might not meet. Finally you submit to us an eleventh hour proposal for enlistment of a force of 15,000 men under British Officers, to be financed by His Majesty's Government under an arrangement which it would be impossible to defend. This proposal is apparently recommended by you on ground that it will commit Persian Government to acceptance of Anglo-Persian Agreement. On the other hand, we are told by you that this scheme emanates from persons who are to be introduced into the Persian Government in order to carry it, and that the Cabinet thus reinforced may feel strong enough to arrest its political opponents—the very procedure which a few months ago was denounced by you as one of the chief crimes of Vossugh's Government and causes of its downfall.

The situation in which two Persian Governments have had to be torpedoed, and a third is now to be jettisoned, in order to introduce new elements at the last moment into the crew, does not inspire me with any confidence, and you would do well to give no encouragement to such desperate devices.

Persia is now paying the penalty for her own vacillation and folly, and, if she cannot extricate herself by the only legitimate means, namely by constitutional action of Mejilis summoned for the purpose, no other expedient can save the situation.

¹ No. 599.

No. 607

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 11, 11.30 a.m.)

No. 801 Telegraphic [C 13584/266/34]

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *December 10, 1920, 11.30 a.m.*

Your telegram No. 585.¹

Persian Government would doubtless be glad to maintain the whole force, if they could, but His Majesty's Consul at Shiraz is doubtless aware that as pointed out in my telegram No. 7 (? 91) there is but little prospect of their

¹ No. 601.

being able for some months to come to provide any money for the upkeep even of a part of it.²

On the other hand now that an honest Governor-General has taken Farman Farma's place in Fars and that province has been freed from exactions which have crippled it for more than four years, there is reason to hope that local revenues may in future be devoted to their proper objects and that it may eventually be possible to apply some part of them to maintenance of a force. This, however, cannot be expected to happen at once.

In the meantime I would recall attention to serious material obstacles in the way of immediate disbandment and disastrous political effect which such a measure cannot fail to produce.

I would further observe that a telegram addressed to Officer Commanding South Persia Rifles by Chief of General Staff,³ delayed and repeated to me, shows that up to December 5th latter was unaware of a decision which so closely concerns him and I would venture to suggest his opinion should be sought before that decision becomes irrevocable.

Part of the South Persia Rifles will of course in any case be saved if His Majesty's Government approve of scheme outlined in my telegram No. 793,⁴ essential feature of which is transfer to Teheran of one or two battalions of that force with a view to their amalgamation with gendarmerie.

I will report in due course views of Persian Government.

Sent to India.

² The reference is probably to No. 599 above; cf. also No. 586.

³ Untraced in Foreign Office archives. A note in the file by Mr. Oliphant, dated Dec. 15, reads: 'this must refer to the Chief of the General Staff in India and not to the C.I.G.S., as neither the latter nor the War Office has hitherto been in any way concerned with the South Persia Rifles.'

⁴ No. 599.

No. 608

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 595 Telegraphic [C 13722/243/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 11, 1920, 3.35 p.m.*

Financial Adviser begs that you will inform Prime Minister and Minister of Finance that his negotiations with the oil company have been completely successful.¹

The interpretation of the agreement for the future has been settled: the company have withdrawn their counter-claim and have agreed to pay the Persian Government the sum of 1,000,000*l.* in respect of the period ending 31st March, 1919. This sum includes 192,000*l.* already paid. A fuller telegram will be sent so soon as the necessary legal documents have been signed,² and a complete report will be presented to the Cabinet in due course.

Financial Adviser requests an acknowledgment.

¹ Mr. Norman reported having done so in his telegram No. 816 of Dec. 16, not printed.

² No. 607 of Dec. 22 to Tehran, not printed. The text of the Agreement, dated Dec. 22, is printed in *I.C.J. Pleadings*, pp. 229-35.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 12, 12 noon)

*No. 807 Telegraphic [C 13600/56/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, December 11, 1920, 5.25 p.m.

Your telegram No. 587.¹

I can assure your Lordship that your suspicions are quite unfounded. Persian Government are pursuing no financial tactics, and, indeed, have at present not even any financial policy, unless that name can be applied to a desperate endeavour to raise enough money to carry on administration till they can submit Anglo-Persian Agreement to Medjliss.

They realise that no further financial help can be expected from official British sources, and that unless they lend an ear to proposals of American financiers (which they have hitherto shown no disposition to do but may be driven to if we fail them), their only salvation is in a loan raised [privately]² in Great Britain.

Previous telegrams have given me the impression that His Majesty's Government intended to facilitate such a loan,³ and I so informed Persian Government, but your telegram under reply makes me doubtful [doubt]² whether this is any longer the case.

I have no evidence in support of any of charges contained in third and fourth sentences of your telegram.

I have heard nothing of any intention to raise money on Russian concessions or of any declaration that such of those concessions as have passed into British hands are cancelled. On the contrary, it has been expressly stated (see my telegram No. 783)⁴ that such concessions will be recognised if confirmed by Medjliss.

If Persian Government are reproached for negotiating a treaty with Bolsheviks, they can reply that His Majesty's Government did not forbid despatch of a mission to Moscow when proposed by late Cabinet (see your telegram No. 352),⁵ that they have kept His Majesty's Government fully informed of discussions, and are being alone guided by their adviser,⁶ that weakness of Persia's geographical and military position obliges them to make such an agreement, more especially since they have more than once been told that Great Britain cannot defend her against serious invasion, and since they [now]² learn that British troops are to be withdrawn in the spring; and, finally, that His Majesty's Government are themselves negotiating with Soviet [the Soviets].²

I have not heard that any British concessions have been offered to foreigners, or that any encouragement has been given to activities of Americans.

¹ No. 603.

² The wording in square brackets is that of the text as sent from Tehran.

³ See, e.g., Nos. 576, 580, and 596.

⁴ Not printed, cf. No. 602.

⁵ No. 497.

⁶ The text as sent read: 'informed of the discussions, and are resolved to be guided by their advice'.

Recent refusal to employ British officers was not part of any deep-laid scheme, but was simply the result of that timidity which is characteristic of nearly all Persian Governments, and, as your Lordship is already aware from my telegram No. 793,⁷ attitude of which you justly complain has now been completely changed, and His Majesty's Government have only to say a word in order to obtain, quite independently of agreement [the Agreement],² entire control of future Persian army.

Seeing that His Majesty's Government have already shown so much patience, it may appear presumptuous on my part to suggest that they should show a little more; but it is nevertheless my duty to say that, if they still think it worth while to pursue policy embodied in agreement, they must make some further allowance for incorrigible dilatoriness of Persian methods.

If they do this, and adhere to their intention to facilitate conclusion of a loan, which, for reasons given in my telegram No. 785,⁸ should be equivalent to 2,500,000 tomans, there is a fair chance that, given skilful management here, agreement will pass Medjliss.

On the other hand, continued insistence on settlement of question before the end of this year—which is physical impossibility—involves immediate abandonment of Persia to her fate.

In the event of a decision to adopt the latter course, I should be grateful for earliest possible warning for various British establishments here, more especially as Imperial Bank of Persia will in no case have too much time to wind up their affairs and make their preparations for early departure, which will be inevitable unless some unforeseen contingency removes threat of invasion before the spring.

(Sent to India. Copies to Bagdad and Kasvin.)

⁷ No. 599.

⁸ No. 595.

No. 610

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 14, 11 p.m.)

No. 808 Telegraphic [C 13824/82/34]

TEHRAN, December 12, 1920, 11 p.m.

Your telegram No. 588.¹

I have acted on Your Lordship's instructions.

Prime Minister is personally honest and his (? request) does not appear to afford evidence to contrary any more than use of Secret Service Funds by European States [statesmen]² reflects on integrity of the latter.

He has never flattered himself that he was certain of getting Anglo-Persian Agreement accepted by Medjliss without expenditure of money, and has often discussed with me means he [to be]² adopted in order to obtain necessary funds.

Till late [lately]² this question would have presented no difficulties since

¹ No. 604.

² The wording in square brackets is that of the text as sent from Tehran.

Government could always dispose of revenue of State according to their pleasure—for example, when I arrived I found a great part of monthly subsidy of three hundred and fifty thousand tomans was being used to silence opposition.

Late Government, however, introduced a kind of Budget which unfortunately contained no provision for Secret Service, and since then problem has become acute for (? Government) [any Prime Minister]² who is unwilling to divert to this object money intended for other purposes.

I therefore felt bound to submit Prime Minister's request though I myself consider so large a sum is unnecessary. Some money would no doubt be required but I believe desired result would be more cheaply attained by arrest and imprisonment in some distant spot of most prominent agitators which would reduce rest to silence, for Terrorists themselves are but little less timid than deputies. The latter majority of whom I believe to be in their hearts favourable to (? agreement) would not then be afraid to support it.

Prime Minister is fully prepared to take this step if contemplated (? loan) is arranged and a favourable reply returned to his proposal for formation of a force under British Officers which would he believes place him in a position so strong that he would be able to carry out any measure of any kind however drastic which he might consider necessary. In present circumstances, however, he may be obliged to resign any day and if he did would be exposed to vengeance of his enemies for any repressive action which he might have taken.

He is in our hands to a much greater extent than was his predecessor and if he can be sure that His Majesty's Government will support him adequately will do practically anything they wish.

Copies to Bagdad and Norperforce. Repeated to India.

No. 611

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 16)

*No. 809 Telegraphic [C 13972/267/34]**

TEHRAN, December 13, 1920

Though your telegram No. 592¹ leads me to doubt whether His Majesty's Government still desires [desire]² immediate formation of a force under British officers, I shall assume that this is the case unless instructed to the contrary, and also that they maintain their offer to contribute 60,000 tomans a month to this object.

On these assumptions I shall endeavour to devise, in consultation with Prime Minister, for submission to His Majesty's Government, a scheme less ambitious than that which he proposed. No Russian officers are any longer in the service of Persian Government at Kasvin, except two doctors who have been temporarily retained because it has hitherto been impossible to find

¹ No. 606.

² The wording in square brackets is that of the text as sent from Tehran.

substitutes for them. Chief accountant of division must remain at Tehran till accounts are settled. Colonel Dobromyslof, who left division some time ago, is also being employed in this connection. Some few unobjectionable officers are also remaining at Tehran in a private capacity, but even of these not all will stay permanently. Of the rest, only one batch, which leaves this week, is still in the country.

I regret to have given the impression that I thought Medjliss might not meet. I have always expected it to do so, but if intimidation to which I have previously referred is allowed to continue it will become increasingly difficult to collect deputies.

I recommended scheme proposed by Prime Minister not in order to commit Persian Government to accept Anglo-Persian Agreement, but to provide deputies with guarantee that they can speak their true minds about it without fear of consequences and *ipso facto* [Persia]² with a defence against possible invasion next year. I also had it in my mind to secure at once, independently of agreement, what I have hitherto understood to be one of the chief objects of His Majesty's Government in extending [concluding]² that arrangement, and perhaps subsequently others as well. There is no real analogy between arrests made by Vossugh-ed-Dowleh and those contemplated by present Prime Minister. Former arrested prominent and popular politicians, including ex-Ministers, and undoubtedly used his power for the purposes of private vengeance. Latter will merely seize a few terrorists and agitators, whose disappearance will be welcomed by all respectable people.

I venture to deprecate charge of having torpedoed two Governments, which I submit is not supported by facts as reported in my telegrams, and of contemplating jettison of a third. I am, on the contrary, doing all in my power, in face of great difficulties, to support present Cabinet, which addition of two men of courage and energy can only strengthen, even if it leads to resignation of one or two of present Ministers, a contingency by no means certain.

Persia is, of course, suffering for her own faults. Is it worth the while of His Majesty's Government in their own interests to save her from consequences of her acts?

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Kasvin.)

No. 612

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 602 Telegraphic [C 13733/510/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 16, 1920, 11.30 a.m.*

We understand Government of India issued on December 13th instructions for immediate disbandment of Khorasan and Seistan Levy Corps in East Persia.¹

¹ This telegram was sent after the receipt of a letter dated Dec. 13 from the India Office informing Lord Curzon of the Government of India's decision to disband the two levy corps

unless instructions to the contrary were received by them by Dec. 13. Lord Curzon had minuted:

'If the Govt of India like deliberately to expose the E. borders of Persia, I should let them do so.

'The result in a short time will be a fine chaos. C 14/12.'

No. 613

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 18, 12.10 p.m.)

*No. 819 Telegraphic [C 14141/56/34]**

TEHRAN, December 17, 1920, 9 a.m.

General Officer Commanding, Norperforce, has communicated to me confidentially a note which he addressed to Director of Military Operations on 9th December regarding arrangements to be made for withdrawal of his troops in spring, which, as I see from a statement made in Parliament a few days ago by Chancellor of the Exchequer¹ and telegraphed here by Reuter, has now been finally decided on. General Officer Commanding points out that withdrawal, of which he considers anarchy must be inevitable consequence, cannot be started before 1st April, and expresses view, which I share, that Persian Government should be informed of date fixed two months before operation begins.

In his covering letter to me General Officer Commanding states that he will be unable to provide any transport for evacuation of civilians, and, as he will require exclusive use of road to Mesopotamia for removal of valuable stores for six weeks before he actually begins withdrawal of his troops, strongly deprecates departure of anybody else by that way.

Therefore assume [assuming]² removal of stores to begin on 1st April; if civilian evacuation is to take place to Mesopotamia, it must be complete before end of March.

On the other hand, if no means are found between now and spring of guaranteeing Persia against Bolshevik invasion, that will be only way by which it will be practicable to evacuate European communities, because approach of invader, and perhaps even mere threat of invasion, will be followed not by transfer of Government from capital to some other town, but by collapse of all Government whatever. All Persians who have anything to lose will flee, worst elements will gain upper hand in towns and throughout provinces, tribes will rise, so that refugees would certainly be robbed of all their property and probably in many instances be murdered as well. There would, moreover, be nothing to prevent invaders themselves from dominating eventually a great part of country. Europeans must therefore leave country along British line of communication while still held by British troops.

It is important for these reasons that I should be informed as soon as possible of date on which withdrawal is to begin, in order that European communities may be able to make timely preparations for departure.

¹ On Dec. 9. See 135 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., col. 2506.

² The wording in square brackets is that of the text as sent from Tehran.

I further beg to be told whether His Majesty's Government wish staffs of His Majesty's Legation and consulate[s]² also to withdraw or to remain at their posts.

Of course, if as result of an agreement either between His Majesty's Government and Russian Soviet Government or between latter and Persian Government invasion can be prevented there is no cause for anxiety.

(Copies to Bagdad and Kasvin.)³

³ Foreign Office telegram No. 610 of Dec. 25 asked Mr. Norman to repeat also to India.

No. 614

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 605 Telegraphic [C 13972/267/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 19, 1920, 5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 809 of 13th December.¹

You should defer taking action with regard to formation of a force under British officers until the Medjliss meets, and either accepts or rejects the agreement, which provides for the formation of a uniform force under such officers.

¹ No. 611.

No. 615

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 21, 10.30 a.m.)

*No. 825 Telegraphic [C 14376/267/34]**

Clear the line

TEHRAN, *December 20, 1920, 11 a.m.*

Your telegram No. 592¹ and my telegram No. 809.²

Prime Minister is much disappointed at refusal of His Majesty's Government to entertain his proposals, but does not abandon all hope of inducing them to reconsider it.

I have tried to induce him to be content with a more modest scheme, but he remains convinced that 15,000 men is the smallest number which would ensure the defence of whole northern frontier.

He has accordingly shown me the draft of a communication containing proposals substantially the same as those reported in my telegram No. 793,³ and if, as result of communications with your Lordship, he is assured of a favourable reply, he will send it to me as official answer to my note. In default of such a . . .⁴ he will either leave my note unanswered or send me proposed reply just the same in order to be able to show the public that he is not responsible for failure to form a force for defence of the country. In either case he will open Medjliss as soon as possible, though he is not hopeful

¹ No. 606.

² No. 611.

³ No. 599.

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'an assurance'.

that a Government with no force behind them will be able to induce it to accept Anglo-Persian agreement.

My position with regard to this question is difficult, because I have naturally informed Persian Government on the strength of your telegram No. 532, paragraph 4,⁵ that His Majesty's Government were willing to advance money required for reorganisation of Cossack divisions [Division]⁶ under British officers, while your Lordship has recently been reported in Reuter's to have stated in House of Lords that 'we accepted temporary responsibility for officering and organising a substitute for Cossack division, subject to repayment in due course by Persian Government.'⁷ I now find it hard to defend the withdrawal of His Majesty's Government from this apparently definite undertaking.

150,000 tomans a month economically spent, as it would be by British officers, would doubtless maintain a force larger than a division at its paper strength, so that difference between number for which it would do [suffice]⁶ and that now proposed would not be great, even if His Majesty's Government cannot see their way to contribute more than 60,000 tomans a month to this object, and if method of raising money suggested in my telegram No. 793 is impracticable, I trust that question of its provision may be seriously considered and Financial Adviser asked to suggest a better plan.

Otherwise we shall be accused of breaking our word and of leaving Persia in the lurch by withdrawing our troops while refusing our [her]⁶ request for help to provide a substitute.

It is of course obvious that 15,000 men cannot be raised and trained by the spring, but if further delay is avoided much [something]⁶ may nevertheless be accomplished between now and then; and if Persian Government can be sure of receiving the necessary funds the number can be made up in the course of succeeding months.

(Repeated to India.)

⁵ i.e. para. 3 of No. 576.

⁶ The wording in square brackets is that of the text as sent from Tehran.

⁷ This statement had been made by Lord Curzon in his speech on Nov. 16; see No. 594, n. 3 above.

No. 616

Memorandum by Mr. G. P. Churchill

[C 14455/56/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 20, 1920*

As the British forces in North West Persia are to be withdrawn as soon as climatic conditions permit in the Spring of 1921, this paper examines the position that is likely to be created, with a view to decide upon an eventual line of policy.

(1) *Bolshevik Advance*

The withdrawal of our forces at Kazvin may be followed by a Bolshevik advance though it must be remembered there is at this moment a Persian

Envoy at Moscow negotiating a treaty with Soviet Russia,¹ and the Persians will probably endeavour, up to the last moment, to make terms with the Bolsheviks.

On the other hand the Bolsheviks may, as soon as our forces evacuate Kazvin, seize the opportunity with the aid of their Persian allies in Ghilan, to make our position and that of the Shah and his Government untenable at Tehran. This will be done, not necessarily by an advance of armed Bolsheviks from Ghilan *via* Kazvin on the capital, but by means of propaganda, agents and sympathisers at Tehran. The Government is likely to collapse and the Shah to fly to Europe. The Northern provinces of Persia will, in all probability, show every symptom of chaos and disruption. Pillage and robbery will no doubt supervene on a large scale and possibly a species of Soviet will be formed under Persian democratic leaders who will eventually absorb the Bolshevik elements.

(2) *Military Forces*

The Persian military forces in the North are unreliable. The Cossack Division cannot be reorganised by British officers between now and March. If this be attempted at the eleventh hour, any military equipment given to them is likely to fall into enemy hands. The gendarmerie, Central Brigade and Tehran police, or any other local Persian forces are not to be counted on and a majority of them will in all probability either return to their homes, taking their arms with them, or will turn highway robbers.

(3) *British Interests*

These are:

- (a) Political,
- (b) Commercial,
- (c) Financial.

(a) Our political interests, apart from our past predominant position in the country, are the defence of India, and the protection of Mesopotamia.

The India Office may contend that the best place to defend India is on the Indian frontier and that, as far as India is concerned, we can leave Persia to her fate. This may be true as regards an armed attack, but the disruption of Persia would probably be followed by a similar process in Afghanistan. It would, moreover, not be a case of defending India against an armed invasion, but against an intense hostile propaganda—more difficult to counter, and no longer carried on by crude Bolshevik agents, but by emissaries from the Shiah co-religionists of the Mohammedan malcontents in India who will have been poisoned by Bolshevik doctrines.

The reaction in Mesopotamia will, in all probability, be felt far sooner and more acutely than in India. The Persian Soviets would no doubt combine with the Kemalist forces as well as the Kurdish tribes of Western Persia to make our position in Mesopotamia as insecure as possible.

¹ See Nos. 589, 590, and 602.

(b) Our commercial interests in Persia, such as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and the Imperial Bank of Persia, as well as a number of minor trading institutions, would be seriously threatened. The Oil Company, having its centre in the South, would not be threatened at once, but the Imperial Bank would be crippled at the outset by the permanent abandonment of its head office.²

(c) The Persian debt to H.M. Government, which now amounts to several millions sterling, would have to be written off, and all the expenditure incurred in Persia, such as the cost of our establishments, secret service, and other expenditure will have been wasted.

(4) *Anglo-Persian Agreement*

It is now too late to think of the possible effect of the acceptance by the Mejliss of the Agreement. If the Agreement were to be ratified at the eleventh hour, it would be too late to put any of its effective conditions into execution.

No real financial reforms can be carried out without a backing of armed force to protect the frontiers, to maintain order internally and to ensure the collection of taxes. An efficient military force is an essential factor in the execution of the terms and the spirit of the Agreement. The only effective and reliable military force in Persia is the South Persia Rifles, under British officers, based on Shiraz.

(5) *Proposed Measures*

If this gloomy forecast be correct, as regards a Bolshevik menace in the Spring, the following measures might be taken.

(1) His Majesty's Government might instruct H.M. Minister at Tehran to make preparations to withdraw the Legation not *via* Hamadan to Bagdad,

² A memorandum dated Dec. 24, of which a copy was received in the Foreign Office from the Admiralty on Jan. 6, 1921, stated that: 'In connection with our policy in Mesopotamia, the Admiralty desire to point out the extreme importance of safeguarding the South Persian oilfields.

'2. Adequate oil supplies are a vital necessity for both the Navy and the Mercantile Marine, and the South Persian fields provide one of the largest and cheapest sources from which the Navy draws its requirements.

'3. At present 350,000 tons of the South Persian output is used by the Navy, and this will shortly be increased to 500,000 tons. This oil is supplied at a special rate, and if the same quantity of oil had to be sought elsewhere, the cost would be six to seven times as great. Moreover, it is extremely doubtful if efforts to obtain such an amount would be successful.

'4. The Admiralty must further point out that the availability of the South Persian supply is a factor in determining the extent of the oil fuel reserves to be laid down abroad for Naval use in time of war, their geographical position being especially advantageous from this point of view.

'If interference with supply has to be contemplated it will be necessary to provide still larger reserves at Singapore and elsewhere than is at present intended.

'5. The extra cost involved in purchasing Naval requirements from other sources (if available) and in providing the additional war reserves referred to in paragraph 4 must be set off against the expense incurred in maintaining the safety of South Persian supplies.

'6. The protection of the oilfields is a military matter, since the Naval guarantee against oversea attack can be given with assurance. . . .'

which would leave the whole country at the mercy of the Bolsheviks and would result in absolute chaos, but to Isfahan where he should endeavour to induce the Shah and the Persian Government to set up the capital.

(2) H.M. Minister might be instructed to get into touch at once with the leading friendly chief of the Bakhtiari tribe with the object of finding out what financial assistance and what military equipment and officers would be required by him to ensure that the Bakhtiari could be counted on to support the Shah and his Government in Central and Southern Persia. His Majesty's Government might arrive at some understanding with this Bakhtiari chief with this object in view, and specially selected British officers might be sent at once to the Bakhtiari country to take charge of this part of the work.

The South Persia Rifles should be maintained and a considerable number of them sent to Isfahan.

The plan outlined above is calculated to save Central and Southern Persia from Bolshevism and to prepare for an eventual attempt to re-establish the Shah's authority in the North. This plan would protect the Oil Company's wells at Shushter by screening them, but it would leave the Hamadan road open. It might be possible, however, to send a Bakhtiari force to the West to deal with any hostile movement there in conjunction with the Shahsavands operating from the North.

(5) [*sic*] *The form of Government*

All idea of governing Persia with and through a Mejliss, or by employing the advanced Democrats should, at this dangerous stage in Persia's affairs, be entirely abandoned. A Government might be formed composed of strong men whose names are known and feared among the great tribes. These men are, it is true, usually corrupt and rapacious, but they are the only people who can deal with the tribal chiefs who will not move for the Democratic leaders whom they despise. Ain-ed-Dowleh is perhaps the best of this class.³ The broad lines could be laid down, however, for the guidance of H.M. Minister who will be best able to carry out the details according to local requirements and the fluctuations of the situation.

G. P. CHURCHILL

³ Persian Grand Vizier 1904-6 and Prime Minister in 1915 and 1917.

No. 617

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 21, 2.10 p.m.)

*No. 829 Telegraphic [C 14424/267/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, December 21, 1920, 8.30 a.m.

My telegram No. 825.¹

Secretary of State for War is reported by Reuter to have said in House of Commons on 15th December that 'We are trying to rouse Persia² to a sense

¹ No. 615.

² The text as sent here read: 'Persian Government'.

of its responsibility,' and that 'We are giving Persians another and final chance to put their house in order by the spring.'³

I venture to submit, as regards first statement, that Persian Government have already shown that they realise their responsibility by asking for our help to form a force for defence of country, and, as regards second, that it can only be justified if that help is extended to them.

(Sent to India; copy Bagdad and Norperforce.)

³ See 136 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 538-9.

No. 618

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 608 Telegraphic [C 14424/267/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *December 23, 1920, 2.15 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 829 of 21st December.²

Passages in speech of Secretary of State for War have been accurately reported.

The Persians have shown only too clearly by the action of present Government, which culminated in assembly of notables on 27th November, reported in your telegram No. 778 of 1st December,² that they are not anxious to have a military force under British officers, but prefer to negotiate with Soviet Russia. My feeling as to the plan submitted in your telegram No. 793 of 7th December³ was expressed in my telegram No. 592 of 9th December,⁴ and I adhere to view that you should give no encouragement to it.

In view of the sustained failure of three successive Persian Governments to take the one step by which their country can be saved, the only thing now left to be done is to consider how best to deal with the new situation created by probable complete collapse in the north, and to secure the protection of our interests elsewhere.

A separate telegram will shortly be addressed to you on this subject.⁵

¹ No. 617. ² No. 591. ³ No. 599. ⁴ No. 606. ⁵ See No. 628 below.

No. 619

The War Office to General Sir A. L. Haldane¹ (Baghdad)

No. 87319 Telegraphic [C 14719/266/34]

Paraphrase

WAR OFFICE, *December 23, 1920, 10 p.m.*

1. Having seen the personal telegrams on the subject of withdrawal from Persia and Mesopotamia, passing between S. of S. and yourself,² we now wish to place the matter on an official basis.

We had been urging for a long time previously the importance of with-

¹ The paraphrase of this telegram here printed was received in the Foreign Office on Dec. 25.

² Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

drawing from Persia before the winter came on, in order that questions of general policy in Mesopotamia might not be fettered by difficulties of withdrawing from Persia during the winter, but for questions of high policy the Cabinet decided to remain there till the spring. They have, however, now decided that the question of withdrawing the force from Persia at an earlier date than April 1st mentioned by Ironside must be fully examined.

The evacuation of white refugees from Teheran and elsewhere in advance of the troops is, of course, essential, but it is not necessary that all stores should be removed, though anything having the appearance of a panic withdrawal is to be avoided.

We shall be glad if you would consult Ironside and give us your considered opinion as to whether earlier withdrawal is a practical possibility and of the consequences and dangers which would be entailed thereby.

Part II. 2. The Cabinet are anxious to reduce expenditure in Mesopotamia by withdrawal at the earliest possible moment to a position covering Basra. So far as we can judge, the date of withdrawal from Persia is the limiting factor, though it is for consideration whether time might not be gained by a preliminary withdrawal in the Mosul Vilayet, before or simultaneously with the withdrawal from Persia, to a position covering railheads. In forwarding an approximate time-table for complete withdrawal to the Basra position, you will no doubt take this into consideration. It is understood that the Cabinet regard the necessity for the early reduction of expenditure by the withdrawal of military forces as entirely over-ruling any considerations for the internal security of the country after our troops have left, and taking this, for the moment, as your basis of calculation, the time required for organising local forces in the evacuated area need not be taken into consideration by you.

Part III. 3. We have tentatively suggested the holding of a position including AHWAZ-KURNA-NASIRIYEH with a garrison estimated at 1 division, 2 cavalry regiments and 2 battalions. You will no doubt give us your views in due course, stating the general line you would propose to hold, the troops required, including an estimate of Air Forces required.³

We are asking the India Office to send communication on the subject of this telegram to the High Commissioner.

³ In a minute dated Dec. 26 Lord Curzon wrote that 'complete disbandment in the South will compel a headlong flight to the Gulf which would be both inexcusable and disastrous as well as entirely inconsistent with the suggested understanding with the Bakhtiari chieftains in order to safeguard the upper waters of the Karun and the oil supplies in the region of Ahwaz-Shuster'. For the suggested understanding with the Bakhtiari, see No. 616, para. (5) (2).

No. 620

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Mr. Oliphant (Received December 27, 6 a.m.)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [C 15146/82/34]

Private and confidential

TEHRAN, December 24, 1920, 11 a.m.

Can you tell me reason for distrust which F[oreign]. O[ffice]. evidently feel of Sipahdar?

It is quite unwarranted for he is certainly the most straightforward Prime Minister with whom we have ever yet had dealings here and is more completely guided by . . .¹ than any of his predecessors has been.

Person likely to be well informed asserts that attitude of F. O. towards Sipahdar is due to influence of Vossugh-ed-Dowleh.

¹ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'by us'.

No. 621

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 28, 12.15 p.m.)

*No. 833 Telegraphic [C 14853/56/34]**

TEHRAN, December 27, 1920, 11.50 a.m.

Your telegram No. 586.¹

Prime Minister has communicated to me two telegrams from Mushaver-ul-Mamalek giving terms of two treaties which Russian Soviet Government offer to conclude with Persian Government, and has begged for advice of His Majesty's Government regarding reply which he should return.

I will forward a complete translation in due course,² and in the meantime summarise the articles:—

1. Abrogation of all existing treaties between Russia and Persia.
2. Abrogation of all treaties between Russia and other Powers concerning Persia.
3. Mutual abstention from interference in internal affairs.
4. Cancellation of Persia's debts to Russia and liberation of security for them.
5. Surrender to Persia of Russian Bank and all its properties.
6. Surrender of Russian roads and telegraphs and of postal³ works at Enzeli.
7. Equal rights of navigation on Caspian Sea.
8. Cancellation of all Russian concessions which are not to be given to other foreigners and surrender of all Russian Government property except Legation and consulate buildings.
9. Restoration of Ashurada and Firuze to Persia and appointment of a Mixed Commission to settle disputes over water rights on River Atrek.
10. Surrender of Russian Ecclesiastical Mission buildings.
11. Abolition of extra-territorial rights.
12. Exemption from military service of subjects of each Power in territory of the other.
13. Mutual grant of most-favoured-nation treatment for travellers.
14. Appointment of a Mixed Commission to fix tariff to be applied to Russian goods imported into Persia.

¹ No. 602.

² Received March 22, 1921, as enclosure in Tehran despatch No. 7 of Jan. 12, 1921.

³ The text as sent read: 'the port works'.

15. Mutual rights of transit.
16. Resumption of postal and telegraphic communication on terms to be settled by a Mixed Commission.
17. Right of 'political association' in each other's capitals while respecting international rights.
18. Consular representation.
19. Ratification in three months and immediate entry into force.

No. 1 is dealt with in your telegram under reference, which also gives me instructions, already carried out, with regard to No. 8, in so far as it relates to concessions.

His Majesty's Government would presumably not object to abrogation of Anglo-Russian Convention involved in No. 2.

It might be necessary for us to claim most-favoured-nation treatment in regard to No. 14.

No. 17 is obscure, and Persian Government should ask for explanation. It may refer to diplomatic representation, for which no provision is made elsewhere.

No. 15 is obscure, but presumably refers to transit of goods.

No. 18 provides for apparently unlimited consular representation, and, in view of former Russian policy of forcing consuls and agents on Persia, I propose to advise Persian Government to insist on such a change in wording as will make it clear that both parties must concur in necessity for appointing a consul to any particular place.

Second treaty to be kept secret.

1. If Russia is attacked through Persia she will have right to send an army there.

2. If British⁴ engaged by Persia take measures against Russia the latter may demand their dismissal.

3. Persian Government will admit extension of Socialism and formation of guild organisations if not against Government, and will grant amnesty to those who have taken part in revolution in Gilan.

4. Concerns the grant of fishing rights to Russian Government after expiration of concessions now in force.

5. In towns where Russian Bank has a house, but there is no consulate, that house shall be used for consulate.

As regards this treaty in general, Persian Government might be advised to say, as Persia is a member of League of Nations, she cannot enter into secret agreements.

Soviet Government have often professed fear of a British attack through Persia, and have occasionally made this a pretext for retention of their troops in Gilan. It is doubtless now motive of No. 1 and No. 2. But, as we have presumably no intention of thus attacking Russia, we need not object, especially since our naval mission, obviously aimed at by No. 2, is no longer here.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'If seamen'.

First part of No. 3 appears to be the only article in either treaty which confers solid advantage on Soviet Government. Persian Government might reply that it is in contradiction with No. 3 of the first treaty. They have already declared their willingness to comply with the second part.

It is not clear why No. 4 and No. 5 should be included in secret treaty, and, as it⁵ is ambiguously worded and groups are missing in No. 5, Persian Government might make further enquiries about both.

It is remarkable that these treaties should contain no demand for abrogation of Anglo-Persian Agreement or withdrawal of British troops. Persian Government, on the other hand, should make the cessation of Bolshevik aggression a preliminary condition of any further negotiations.

Altogether these proposals are so favourable to Persia, and secure so little for Russia, that it is hard to believe they have been made in good faith.

(Sent to India; copy to Bagdad and Kasvin.)

⁵ The text as sent read: 'No. 4'.

No. 622

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received December 30, 11.30 a.m.)

*No. 834 Telegraphic [C 15024/267/34]**

TEHRAN, December 27, 1920, 5.15 p.m.

Your telegram No. 608.¹

I shall of course act on your Lordship's instructions, but would submit that, in face of facts reported in my telegrams Nos. 793² and 825³, it cannot be contended that there is no desire here for formation of a force under British officers. There is, on the contrary, a growing demand for it which is, I know, supported by most, if not all, of present Cabinet.

Assembly of Notables did not reject proposal, but merely declined to accept responsibility, which Government out of timidity quite unjustifiably sought to impose on it, and result of its deliberations was anyhow known to His Majesty's Government before Secretary of State for War gave assurances in question.

Persian Government do not prefer to negotiate with Russian Soviet Government, but are obliged to do so for reasons given in my telegram No. 807,⁴ and we appear to have even less cause than before to complain of their action now that while we withdraw our own force we refuse to lend them means of creating one to take its place. However much they and their predecessors are to blame for our attitude fact remains that they expected⁵ in a few months to be defenceless and are therefore driven to make best terms they can with their enemy while there is yet time. They are, however, anxious in this as in every other respect to be guided by advice and wishes of His Majesty's Government.

(Repeated to Bagdad and Norperforce; sent to India.)

¹ No. 618.

² No. 599.

³ No. 615.

⁴ No. 609.

⁵ This word read 'expect' in the text as sent from Tehran.

No. 623

Mr. Oliphant to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

Telegraphic [C 15146/82/34]

Urgent. Private and confidential FOREIGN OFFICE, December 29, 1920, 6 p.m.

Your telegram of December 24, received 28th.¹

Vossough-ed-Dowleh never saw Secretary of State and in conversation with me, so far as I recollect, only once mentioned Sipahdar, see Foreign Office telegram No. 578 of December 1.² Your informant, therefore, is completely adrift.

My Chief's feelings towards Sipahdar are not so much those of distrust as of conviction that he is an extremely weak man, who while possibly animated with the best possible intentions, has not the courage to see them through. We cannot so far detect any advantage in change of Government or any serious effort to save Anglo-Persian Agreement.

¹ No. 620.

² No. 593.

No. 624

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 3, 1921, 1.30 p.m.)

*No. 842 Telegraphic [E 118/113/34]**

TEHRAN, December 31, 1920, 2.30 p.m.

Following sent to Viceroy, No. 135:—

'Your telegram No. 1393/S to Secretary of State for India¹ recently received here.

'I am explaining by despatch² why I dissent from your conclusions, and regard your constructive proposals as impracticable in present circumstances.³

¹ Of Dec. 6, not printed; see n. 3 below.

² Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

³ The conclusions and constructive proposals referred to were as follows:

'Three conclusions seem now forced on us: (1) that Anglo-Persian agreement will never be genuinely accepted as it stands; (2) that Persia will not be able, in our lifetime, to raise an Army fit to oppose external enemy; and (3) that any policy involving direct financial or military assistance on our part must inevitably prevent growth of that nationalist spirit, which is, in the long run, our real defence against incursion of Bolshevism. If these are facts, then time has come to face them resolutely and to re-adjust policy to suit them.

'Our constructive proposals are these. We should forestall rejection of agreement by whittling it down to limit which would be acceptable to Persia and meet her imperative need, which is a sufficient flow of revenue to carry on her miserable administration, and keep up some force for internal law and order. S[c]huster experiment [see G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914*, vol. x, part i, pp. 746 ff.] seems to show that expert foreign control of finance would not only be welcomed by Persia, but may be expected to bring about large increase of State revenues. His Majesty's Government are in a position to secure (? first hand) evidence of present Financial Adviser on both points under existing conditions. If it is favourable, and if the British personnel would be still acceptable to Persia and not likely to provoke Bolshevik aggression, then we

'A few weeks ago Anglo-Persian Agreement, given judicious management and the introduction of a few modifications, had better chance of acceptance by Medjliss than ever before.

'Four months' loyal co-operation with a Nationalist Government had to a great extent dispelled mistrust with which our policy had been viewed, presence of a new General Officer Commanding Norperforce had enabled us to take advantage of dishonesty and incapability of Russian officers of Cossack division in order to remove them from Persia, and His Majesty's Government had publicly at home, and officially here, undertaken to lend immediate help in money and officers to organise a Persian force.

'Vacillation of Persian Government, however, led His Majesty's Government to withdraw their undertaking, and decision to postpone this help till agreement has been accepted by Medjliss when coupled with announcement that Norperforce will be withdrawn in the spring is equivalent to refusing it altogether, because it is unlikely that Assembly will have the courage to take step calculated to give Bolsheviks new pretext for aggression, against which Persia, moreover,⁴ will have no defence whatever.

'Even were Medjliss to do this, act would come too late to be of any assistance, because, though in the absence of any new difficulty, Assembly will be opened as soon as weather and state of roads permit arrival at Tehran of small number of deputies now on their way, whose presence is required to form quorum, constitutional procedure will prevent it from discussing agreement for at least a month after it has met, so that decision on that question at best can only be reached a few weeks before our troops begin to move.

advocate concentrating on British Financial Adviser, whose presence would ensure us real but unostentatious influence in Persian affairs.

'Cossack Brigade and South Persian Rifles should be handed over to Persia to be officered by her as she likes. If she chooses to bring in foreign element we should not object, though we shall endeavour to guide her choice into unobjectionable channel. In any case sharp drop in efficiency is inevitable. But while neither the . . . [text is here uncertain] nor any other Persian force will ever be fit for use against external enemy, they will be as good for internal law and order as anything Persia has ever had.

'As regards external enemies, as soon as Persia realises that she must look after her external defence herself, she will make shift with her own Oriental methods of diplomacy. Our own disappearance into the background will rob Bolshevism of her one valid excuse, and possibly remove temptation for open aggression.

'These proposals are devoid of attractiveness of elaborate proposals under the Anglo-Persian Agreement. But they have at least this to commend them. They are designed to square with the facts. To us, at any rate, it seems that we have failed because we have tried to do too much. Realising that nothing Persian can be ever efficient we sought efficiency in the only possible way: the infiltration of Persian administration by British officers. Persian nationalism, however, has proved too strong for Persia to accept this willingly, and we are unable to face military and financial commitments (? involved in) forcing matters through. We should reconcile ourselves, therefore, to a (? continuance of the) inefficiency and corruption that are endemic in Persia, and simply try to avoid (? reproach), (which also constitutes the greatest danger to ourselves) that where we found gross maladministration we left chaos. In short, we should leave Persia to work out her own salvation, simply providing her with assistance which she needs most, and which is the only assistance she is likely, of her own free will, to accept from us, viz., a Financial Adviser.'

⁴ The text as sent read: 'by hypothesis'.

'Opportunity lost will never recur in so favourable a form, but if His Majesty's Government consent to give promised help with least possible delay, to keep British troops where they are at least till the autumn, and to maintain South Persia Rifles for another year, it may be possible to save situation, otherwise it will, I believe, develop as forecast in my telegram No. 819.⁵

'His Majesty's Government have shown much patience, and must decide whether interests involved are sufficiently important to justify them in showing a little more, and, if so, whether they are in a position to do so in view of pressure to which they are now exposed in Parliament and in press.'

(Copy Bagdad and Kazvin.)

⁵ No. 613.

No. 625

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 2 Telegraphic [E 76/76/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 1, 1921, 6 p.m.*

Financial Adviser begs that you will express to Sipahdar Azam his thanks for his Highness's kind message appreciating success of his mission¹ and inform his Highness that, unless instructed to the contrary, he will direct bank to transfer to Tehran $\frac{1}{4}$ million tomans monthly, beginning 22nd January. At present exchange balance will last eight or nine months. This proposal does not preclude Persian Government from transferring more if really required, but Financial Adviser observes that this windfall is non-recurrent, and, further, that he is obtaining 6 per cent. from bank on deposit or 5 per cent. on balance from day to day. He expresses earnest hope that Persian Government will enforce reforms already proposed for increasing revenue and decreasing expenditure, and begs that balance of this million may be husbanded with special reference to the additional charges which must fall on Imperial Government when His Majesty's Government cease to defray cost of South Persia Rifles.

¹ See No. 608. In a private letter dated Dec. 31 to Mr. Oliphant, Mr. Armitage-Smith referred to 'a highly appreciative message which he had received direct from Sipahdar'.

No. 626

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 5, 2.45 p.m.)

*No. 4 Telegraphic [E 221/221/34]**

TEHRAN, *January 3, 1921, 12.30 p.m.*

My telegram No. 710 of [October 27] 1920.¹

Prime Minister lately warned me that Shah would shortly try to obtain my consent to his immediate departure for Europe . . .², and thought that if

¹ No. 570.

² The text received was here uncertain. In the text as sent a new paragraph began here and read: 'Prime Minister thought . . .'.

I refused on my own initiative to entertain the idea His Majesty might start, in spite of my opposition, in the hope of being able to make the matter right with His Majesty's Government after his arrival. His Highness therefore suggested that I should simply reply that I would submit His Majesty's request to your Lordship, and that you should discourage plan.

Shah has now told me that the state of his nerves is getting worse, and has described his symptoms at great length. Doctor recommends complete rest and distraction, which are unobtainable here, but in present serious situation of country His Majesty feels at this moment . . .³. He is already much criticised for his inability to work, cause of which is misunderstood, and if he goes he will be reproached with deserting his post, with indifference to the fate of Persia and with caring only to enjoy himself on the money which he has been able to remit abroad.

He asked, nevertheless, whether I did not think it possible for him to absent himself for two months, as soon as Medjliss had met, to consult nerve specialist at Paris, leaving Vali Ahd⁴ to act as Regent with full powers. So short an absence could not affect British interests here, which he was still as anxious as ever to preserve. I promised to reflect on this proposal and to submit it to your Lordship, but said that I felt misgivings as regards effect of the step on His Majesty's own position.

Shah is doubtless in a nervous state, but I believe it to be solely the effect of fear. Real motive of his anxiety to leave the country probably is wish to be in safety when impending crisis occurs. If His Majesty's Government stand by Persia and danger therefore passes, he hopes to return, while if they leave her to be overrun by the Bolsheviks he will remain in Europe.

Shah was, I understand, fairly well received on his return from his last journey, and if he had shown more interest in affairs of State and less in increasing his private fortune and in remitting money abroad, he might have become popular; but, as it is, his indifference to everything save his own interests has disgusted all classes of his subjects, and if he left the country it is unlikely that he would ever be able to return.

This in itself would doubtless not be an unmixed evil if it were easy to find a satisfactory substitute for His Majesty, but in the present circumstances his deposition would import new elements of instability into a situation which already contains more than enough of them, and might well hasten revolution, which I believe in any case to be inevitable if British protection to Persia is not continued in some form.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'he cannot leave it'.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'the Valiahd', i.e. Ahmed Mirza, the Shah's younger brother and heir apparent.

No. 627

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 4, 10 p.m.)

*No. 5 Telegraphic [E 191/2/34]**

TEHRAN, January 3, 1921, 12.30 p.m.

The Shah asked me yesterday whether withdrawal of British troops indicated that His Majesty's Government had ceased to take any interest in Persia, or whether they still wished Anglo-Persian Agreement to be accepted by Medjliss.

I said that, so far as I was aware, they had not changed their attitude with regard to the agreement.

He then asked whether, if it were accepted, they would be willing to allow troops to remain.

I said I did not think so.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

No. 628

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 5 Telegraphic [E 2/2/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, January 3, 1921, 5 p.m.

Your telegrams No. 843 of 31st December¹ and No. 819 of 17th December.²

There would appear to be some mistake. No such orders as those mentioned in your telegram No. 843 have so far been sanctioned by His Majesty's Government. The military authorities in Mesopotamia were asked to advise as to practical possibility of a withdrawal from North-West Persia before the spring, but were given no authority to carry it out.³ Any such action, therefore, is premature. Matter will be considered by Cabinet in course of next few days. On the other hand, whatever the exact date of evacuation, which, as I have frequently stated, could not be postponed beyond the spring (*vide* my telegrams No. 532 of 5th November⁴ and No. 552 of 16th November,⁵ as well as my speech in Parliament of latter date),⁶ it is clearly necessary to consider the policy that will have to be pursued, should the retirement of British troops, whether now or later, have the results anticipated in paragraph 4 of your telegram No. 819 of 17th December.²

Negotiations pending between Persian and Soviet Governments suggest some doubt as to whether British retreat would be followed by immediate Bolshevik advance upon Tehran. But prospects of this must be so attractive to Russians that they could hardly be expected to forgo the occasion.

To resist such an advance no military forces will be available.

¹ Not printed. In this Mr. Norman reported having been informed in strict confidence by G.O.C. Norperforce that he had received orders from G.O.C. Mesopotamia 'to withdraw his troops so that, if possible, all shall have reached Bagdad by end of February'.

² No. 613.

³ See No. 619.

⁴ No. 576.

⁵ No. 581.

⁶ See No. 594, n. 3.

The opportunity of creating a Persian force under British officers has been deliberately thrown away by folly of successive Persian Governments. It would be futile at this date to offer military equipment that could only fall into enemy hands. Similarly, the period of grace allowed for meeting of Medjliss having expired, no chance of help from Anglo-Persian Agreement now remains.

In these circumstances we have to look at situation from point of view of British interests in Persia, with object of protecting latter in centre and south and of saving as much of country from being overrun by Bolshevism as may be possible.

We suggest your consideration of the following measures:—

1. That women, children and other members of the British colony whose presence is not essential be evacuated gradually by the Hamadan route, assuming that this is not congested by military withdrawal.

2. That the Legation and remaining members of the colony should remain at Tehran as long as possible. Assuming the conclusion of a Perso-Soviet Agreement, there may be no need to withdraw at all.

3. That if and when you consider the capital to be untenable you should withdraw to Ispahan. Much will depend upon whether Shah and Persian Government decide to leave Tehran and set up Government in another city, or whether they feel themselves strong enough to remain in north. If a move to the south is contemplated, it is manifestly desirable that preparations should be made in advance with a view to avoidance of panic, and that arrangements for receptions should be made at Ispahan.

It is so difficult at this distance to appraise the local situation that I am unable to say whether above propositions savour more of prudence or of undue alarm, and I await your opinions upon them before offering supplementary suggestions as to possibility of entering into agreement with Bakhtiari chieftains and utilising South Persia Rifles to protect approaches to oilfields and hold southern parts of the country.

A material factor will be the character and composition of a Persian Ministry strong enough to carry out such a policy if it be found necessary.
(Repeated to India.)

No. 629

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 3 Telegraphic [C 14853/56/34]**

Secret

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 3, 1921, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 833 of 27th December.¹

Our information as to treaty agrees generally with your summary.

In article 9, however, we understand Persia is to recognise ownership of Russia in Russian Sarakhs.

¹ No. 621.

In article 17, 'political association' is more likely to be 'diplomatic representatives' as you suggest. Moreover, we know that a Bolshevik Minister is already appointed and is contemplating proceeding *via* Khorassan.

Of secret treaty, article 1 is more definite. It states that should Persia be unable to oppose the advance of a force wishing to attack Russia through Persia, the former will have the right to send troops into Persia from the direction of Azerbaijan and Armenia to support Persia.

An additional article 6 provides for continued occupation of Enzeli by Russian guards without interference so long as the Caucasus is threatened, and promises evacuation of Persia as soon as this menace is removed, and a further article 7 for a commission to assess damage in Ghilan.

Generally we share your scepticism as to Bolshevik motives, and fear specifically that right of transit in article 15 may be interpreted as providing *couloir* for Bolshevik agents to Afghanistan. In addition to grave threat to remain in North Persia as long as Caucasus is threatened we also fear that continuance of subsidy to, and presence of British officers with, South Persia Rifles may under article 1 of Secret Treaty be interpreted by Bolsheviks as potential threat of attack, carrying with it right to maintain troops indefinitely in the north.

In order to counter this possibility and endeavour to secure complete withdrawal of Bolshevik forces simultaneously with withdrawal of British forces from North Persia, you should point out to Persian Government that they have repeatedly received assurances from us of our desire for Persian independence and integrity, and that, in these circumstances and in view of fact that we pay for South Persia Rifles, owing to impecuniosity of Persian Government, they can definitely state that the force is not aggressive but rather in the nature of a gendarmerie. If Persian Government can secure from Bolsheviks definite withdrawal of their forces, we would be prepared to give Persian Government a definite undertaking that we harbour no aggressive designs against Bolsheviks through Persia.

It is obviously impossible at present to contemplate any form of tripartite agreement regarding Persia with the Bolsheviks, whose intentions and undertakings are equally to be mistrusted, but the hope would not seem excluded that, armed with such assurances and with their eyes fully open to the dangers of the situation, the Persian Government may still achieve through their negotiations a simultaneous withdrawal of the opposing British and Bolshevik forces, which would leave His Majesty's Government, through the medium of South Persia Rifles, in a position to afford the modicum of military support against the public disorder to which their unreasonable refusal of the Anglo-Persian Agreement will inevitably expose them.

Repeat to India.

No. 630

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 4 Telegraphic [C 15024/267/34]**

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 3, 1921, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 834 of 27th December:¹ Proposed organisation of Persian force under British officers.

It is useless to continue a discussion as to whether or not the Persians wanted to reorganise their forces in Northern Persia under British officers.

I would only remind you of your telegram No. 765 of 25th November,² reporting the strong pressure you brought to bear on present Prime Minister, and his reply 'that measure would certainly arouse widespread disapproval'.

Again, in your telegram No. 778 of 1st December you state explicitly 'that advice was rejected'.³ The ante-penultimate paragraph of that telegram sums up the position accurately. At any rate, it is now too late to think of any such plan and I must adhere to the decision already conveyed to you in my telegram No. 605 of 19th December.⁴

¹ No. 622.

² No. 586.

³ No. 591.

⁴ No. 614.

No. 631

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 8 Telegraphic [E 26/2/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 5, 1921, 7 p.m.*

It was decided at Cabinet, 4th January, that military evacuation of British troops should commence, as already announced, on or about 1st April. Orders cited by you in your telegram No. 843 of 31st December,¹ if ever issued, were therefore unauthorised, and may be disregarded. Contemplated evacuation, however, raises at once question put in your telegram No. 6 of 3rd January,² as well as in my No. 5 of 3rd January.³ We shall await your reply on these points, bearing in mind (1) that evacuation of Europeans may not after all be inevitable, (2) that southern as well as western route should be considered.

(Repeated to India.)

¹ See No. 628, n. 1.

² Not printed. The reference is to the question of warning European and American communities that after the withdrawal of Norperforce they could not expect the military to be responsible for them.

³ No. 628.

No. 632

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 9 Telegraphic [E/26/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 5, 1921, 8 p.m.*

Cabinet decision, to which I referred in my telegram No. 8 of 5th January,¹ was couched in following terms:—

‘1. The combatant troops in North Persia should be in a position to begin their actual withdrawal on 1st April.

‘2. Prior to this date all military impedimenta should be withdrawn.

‘3. Civilians should be warned at once that if they wish to withdraw from Tehran *via* Hamadan they must leave North Persia in time for the road to be clear by 1st April.

‘4. All details to be arranged between the British Minister at Tehran and the General Officer Commanding in North Persia.’

¹ No. 631.

No. 633

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 10, 11.30 a.m.)

*No. 8 Telegraphic [E/506/2/54]**

TEHRAN, *January 5, 1921, 12 midnight*

A Bolshevik mission, composed of Valibegof, Governor of Nakchivan, a Russian named Mikhail-Yangvitch (*sic*)¹ and a Turkish officer named Hikmat Effendi, with twelve followers, reached Tabriz 9th December. They announced that Erivan had been declared Soviet Republic on 6th December² and pretended that their mission was purely commercial, but they discussed political questions with Governor-General.

In reply to questions, Governor-General informed them that Persia had at first been encouraged by proclamations and declarations of policy issued by Kerensky[’s]³ Government, and later by Soviet Government, to believe in goodwill of Russia as reconstituted, but that the invasion of Gilan by Bolshevik Nationalists [forces]³, which had inflicted more injury and hardship on peasants and labourers than upon any other class, had alarmed and disgusted whole of Persia.

Valibegof replied disclaiming responsibility, and explaining that this movement had been work of enemies of Soviet Government, and its leaders had been recalled to Moscow, where they would probably be executed.

Mission [He]³ pretended that Bolshevik force remained in Persia lest British should advance and obtain command of Caspian, and Governor-

¹ A pencilled note on the copy of this telegram in the Tehran archives reads: ‘it is an impossible name’.

² See Vol. XII, Nos. 634 and 639.

³ The wording in square brackets is that of the text as sent from Tehran.

General replied that there was nothing to fear on that score, but that British had reason to fear their own withdrawal would be followed by a Bolshevik advance on Bagdad.

Valibegof promised to report result of this conversation to Moscow, with a view to removal of cause of complaint.

Mission's chief object appears to have been to obtain sanction to appointment of a Bolshevik consul at Tabriz and apparently of a consular agent [consular agents]³ at Maku and Khoi. Governor-General replied to this proposal that he was not competent to decide such a question, which must be referred to Tehran, but he explained at length that, as condition of Persia differed from that of Russia, and she was not ready to receive communist[ic]³ ideas, it would be preferable that any consul who might be appointed should be a man of moderate views.

Valibegof told him that Soviet Government had abandoned policy of attempting to enforce their system on other countries, . . .⁴ subject of exchange of exports [commodities]³. They had brought with them rice, cotton and copper tools, and Governor-General arranged for delivery to them on their return to Julfa of 50 kharvas of wheat and a similar quantity of barley. Circumstances compelled him to ignore impudence of mission in offering part of spoils of . . .⁵ expedition for barter in Persia. Mikhail-Yangvitch, the Russian, added that they feared introduction of British submarines into Caspian, and warned Governor-General that an alliance between Persia and any other Power would be regarded by Soviet Government as a hostile act, and mission stigmatised present Cabinet as pro-British.

Mission left 13th December, leaving one member behind, probably to act as a propagandist.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'The Mission then discussed the'.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'the Gilan'.

No. 634

*Lord Chelmsford to Mr. Montagu (Received January 6, 10 a.m.)*¹

No. 23 S Telegraphic [E 518/113/34]

*January 5, 1921*²

Teheran's telegram No. 135, dated 31st December.³ We are sorry Minister is unable to accept our conclusions and regards our constructive proposals as impracticable. Our views, however, have been strengthened, not shaken, by subsequent developments. In particular, we do not share the Minister's view that Bolshevik proposals to Persia are not genuine. To us they appear peculiarly shrewd, devised to undermine our position, and to further their

¹ A copy of this telegram was received in the Foreign Office from the India Office on Jan. 11.

² See No. 381, n. 4.

³ No. 624.

main end in Persia, viz., internal rupture under the influence of Bolshevik propaganda. Ostentatious abnegation of Czarist gains and ambitions in Persia is meant to throw Great Britain's general attitude and demands under Anglo-Persian Agreement into high relief, and thus foster anti-British propaganda in Persia and outside, while Consular representation clauses are designed to secure necessary propaganda nuclei. To this move the policy put forward in my telegram of the 6th December last, 1393 S.,⁴ seems to us the proper course.

Repeated to Minister at Teheran.

⁴ See No. 624, n. 3.

No. 635

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 10, 10.20 a.m.)

*No. 11 Telegraphic [E 458/2/34]**

TEHRAN, January 6, 1921, 11.30 a.m.

Your telegram No. 3.¹

I gave Prime Minister additional information regarding terms of proposed treaty which was new to him.

I do not think that article 15 need inspire apprehension, as it relates only to transit of goods. It is rather article 13 which is likely to be used for purpose in question.

Prime Minister is grateful for assurance contained in penultimate paragraph, though he fears that it will not have the effect of stopping a Bolshevik invasion.

That and last paragraph encourage me to hope that His Majesty's Government have reconsidered their decision to disband South Persia Rifles, and penultimate paragraph of your telegram No. 5 supports this interpretation.² May I be informed whether it is correct?

Persian Government have consulted ex-Prime Minister and a certain number of notables regarding answer to be returned to Russian Soviet Government, and it has been agreed to reply in accordance with my advice (see my telegram No. 833).³ Draft of telegram to be sent will be submitted to me before despatch.

Prime Minister informed me that Soviet Government were now pressing Persian Government very hard to receive at once Bolshevik special Ambassador, who has already been appointed, one Rotstein.⁴

On this point his Highness will reply by my advice that this could not be done till diplomatic relations had been regularly established by signature of treaty.

I assume from your telegram that it is impossible any longer to count upon

¹ No. 629.

² No. 628.

³ No. 621.

⁴ M. T. A. Rothstein had been a member of the Soviet Russian delegation to Great Britain in Aug. 1920. See Vol. VIII, Introd. Note to Chap. X, and No. 646 below.

defending Persia from Bolsheviks by means of a clause in Anglo-Soviet Commercial Agreement binding the latter Government to abstain from aggression there, of which there seemed some hope last summer.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Constantinople.)

No. 636

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 10 Telegraphic [E 221/221/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 6, 1921, 12.15 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 4 (of 3 January.¹ Shah's desire to leave Persia).

I trust that the Shah has not been encouraged by your reference here to expect any favourable reply to his suggestion.

You should inform H.M. that to desert his country at this critical juncture even if ostensibly for a journey of only two months' duration would inevitably be interpreted as a sign of cowardice. Were he to decide to run away he could in no circumstances expect the slightest support or help from us.

I agree with you that few alternative candidates for throne could be worse. If, however, any Government is to continue to exist in Persia, it is essential that such a disintegrating factor as flight of Sovereign should if possible be avoided.

Repeated to India.

¹ No. 626.

No. 637

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 10)

*No. 10 Telegraphic [E 473/2/34]**

TEHRAN, *January 6, 1921*

Your telegram No. 5.¹

Medjliss will probably be opened very soon, and Prime Minister proposes to submit Anglo-Persian Agreement to it, and is still not without hope of a successful result, although I myself consider this most improbable for reasons given in my telegram No. 842.²

I gather, however, from your telegram that His Majesty's Government have definitely abandoned the policy embodied in agreement, and would be unwilling to perform their part in it even if it were adopted here.

I note, on the other hand, that Mr. Lloyd George is reported to have said quite recently in Parliament that we must keep our word with regard to agreement.³ I ought, therefore, to be in a position to make to Persian Government a definite official statement on this point before Medjliss meets.

(Sent to India.)

¹ No. 628.

² No. 624.

³ On Dec. 15, 1920; see No. 662 below, n. 7.

No. 638

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 11, 12.30 p.m.)

*No. 14 Telegraphic [E 550/221/34]**

My telegram No. 4.¹

TEHRAN, January 7, 1921, 11.30 a.m.

Shah, alarmed by reports of intended evacuation of European women, &c., sent for me to-day and tried for nearly two hours to induce me to agree to his immediate departure or abdication.

He urged that if he went abroad at once it would be possible to account for his action on grounds of health, whereas if he left just before British troops it would be said that he was mere servant of Great Britain. He asserted that he had incurred much unpopularity by identifying himself with our policy and taking my advice. We were now withdrawing our support from Persia, which could not continue to exist as a nation without it. He did not complain of our change of policy, reason of which he understood; but if he were caught by Bolsheviks, who would certainly come here as soon as British troops had left, he would inevitably lose his life. On the other hand, he would fare no better if he fell into power of Bakhtiari; he therefore refused categorically in any circumstances to go to Ispahan with Persian Government if they moved there.

I explained to him that his immediate departure would probably involve destruction of monarchy; that his duty to his people and family as well as his own interests was for him to stay as long as was consistent with his personal safety.

Finally, I succeeded in inducing him to postpone his decision so as to give us both time to reflect, but he would only consent to do this in return for my promise that I would give him a month's warning of date of withdrawal of troops.

If after mature consideration and consultation with Prime Minister it appears nothing is to be gained by keeping Shah here, and if it seems likely that his departure will not cause immediate revolution and that his brother would prove a more popular and energetic ruler, I will propose to His Majesty's Government that he should be allowed to go sooner.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Kasvin.)

¹ No. 626.

No. 639

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 12 Telegraphic [E 191/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, January 7, 1921, 2 p.m.

Your telegram No. 5 of 3rd January.¹

The Shah cannot be ignorant of views and wishes of His Majesty's Government, who throughout have hoped to see agreement passed by Medjliss, but who could not be expected to continue indefinitely to await action by that body.

Retention of troops is, I regret, out of question.

¹ No. 627.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 9, 11.45 a.m.)

*No. 17 Telegraphic [E 406/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, *January 8, 1921, 11.15 a.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 5, 8 and 9.¹

As regards measures suggested for my consideration:—

1. I am strongly of opinion that all European and American women and children here and all men whose presence is not essential should be evacuated as soon as possible, and General Officer Commanding Norperforce, who shares this view, is already making necessary arrangements. United States representatives are warning their nationals. This measure will doubtless increase panic here, but I do not, at any rate at present, anticipate any consequent danger to foreigners.

2. Foreign Legations and remaining foreigners will remain as long as they can do so safely, and this Legation will certainly be expected to give signal for withdrawal.

All Persians and most Europeans whom I have consulted have expressed conviction that, whether Persian-Soviet Treaty is signed or not, removal of our troops will be immediately followed by a Bolshevik occupation, or, at least, by arrival of numerous Bolshevik agents, with result anticipated in my telegram No. 819.² Two or three Europeans, however, whose opinions I value, do not believe arrival of Bolsheviks would necessarily be attended with danger to foreign lives or property. I do not at present share this optimism, at least as far as this Legation and British subjects are concerned, for language of Soviet authorities everywhere with regard to Great Britain is increasingly threatening, while precedent established by conduct of Bolsheviks at Baku is not encouraging.³ Further fact that British troops are still engaged in active operations against Soviet forces in Gilan is unlikely to dispose latter to leniency here.

Consider that⁴ infiltration of Russian and other Bolsheviks into the capital has already taken place and news of approaching withdrawal of British troops has greatly swelled ranks and encouraged activities of native Bolshevik element. If the former gain control of the latter some danger may result, even without further accessions of Bolsheviks from outside.

3. It follows from above that few believe in possibility of maintaining an ordered⁵ Persian Government here or in establishing one in another town after withdrawal of British troops.

Prime Minister, however, thinks that such a Government might be formed at Ispahan and repel an invader with help of gendarmerie and police.

¹ Nos. 628, 631, and 632 respectively.

² No. 613.

³ The Soviet authorities in the Republic of Azerbaijan had detained a number of British subjects at Baku whose reported ill-treatment had aroused indignation in England. See Vol. XII, Nos. 550, 568, 575, 585, 589, 595 and Chap. V *passim*.

⁴ The text as sent read: 'Considerable'.

⁵ The text as sent read: 'orderly'.

I do not believe this plan to be practicable, for gendarmerie, at least, are not to be trusted, and Bakhtiari would be constant source of danger, for they are essentially unfriendly, and, even if subsidised, could not be relied on, except perhaps to protect oilfields, in which they have an interest. Best chance of protecting Government at Ispahan would be in transfer there of some South Persia Rifles.

Further, as reported in my telegram No. 14,⁶ Shah has categorically declined to go to Ispahan, and I feel sure that it will be impossible to induce him to reconsider his refusal, so that there would have to be a change of Sovereign.

If a non-Bolshevik Government is to exist in Persia after departure of our troops Shiraz would appear to be their most suitable seat, because its position offers some guarantee against invasion from the north and South Persia Rifles are there. There would, moreover, be a better chance of enlisting services of surrounding tribes through Qavam-ul-Mulk⁷ than of ensuring fidelity of Bakhtiari farther north.

I offer above observations provisionally and with diffidence, because it is impossible, even on the spot, to forecast the future with certainty till the situation has developed further, but in any case it is clear that Persia can do little to help herself, and⁸ measure of effort which His Majesty's Government are prepared to make to preserve British interests in the south, if, as seems at least probable, their policy necessitates sacrifice of those in the rest of the country.

(Sent to India.)

⁶ No. 638.

⁷ Head of an influential Persian family in the province of Fars.

⁸ The text as sent contained the following additional words after 'and': 'that much must therefore depend on the'.

No. 641

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 12, 11.45 a.m.)

*No. 16 Telegraphic [E 584/221/34]**

TEHRAN, January 8, 1921, 11.30 a.m.

Your telegram No. 10.¹ Reference to your Lordship was, on the contrary, made in order that I might be able to use your authority to discourage Shah from abandoning the country, as explained in my telegram No. 4, paragraph 2.² Since I have, as reported in my telegram No. 14,³ strongly dissuaded him on my own initiative, and have appealed to his patriotism and pressed the arguments adduced by your Lordship, I shall, of course, be able to employ them again with an added weight, but have no hope of being able to wring from him any concession beyond that which I have already obtained.

Shah, mad with fear, is dead to shame and inaccessible to reason. He is

¹ No. 636.

² No. 626.

³ No. 638.

financially independent of us and willing to risk the loss of his throne, while we shall shortly cease to be able to afford him protection at home. He has therefore no longer anything to fear or to hope from us, nor any motive for following our advice, which we must for the same reason in future expect to see increasingly neglected by all Persians.

It was well known here that, in the circumstances, the Shah would flee abroad, and other Persians in similar positions will, sooner or later, follow his example or leave [for]⁴ the south.

(Repeated to India. Copy to Tashkend; High Commissioner, Bagdad; General Officer Commanding, Bagdad; and General Officer Commanding, Norperforce.)

⁴ This word was in the text as sent from Tehran.

No. 642

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 12, 10.45 a.m.)

*No. 18 Telegraphic [E 578/113/34]**

TEHRAN, *January 9, 1921, 11.30 a.m.*

Government of India telegram No. 23 S to Secretary of State for India.¹

I entirely agree with opinion expressed regarding object of proposals of Russian Soviet Government to Persian Government, but it must be remembered that even if former strictly adhere to their engagements under treaty when it is signed, by refraining from invading Persia or interfering officially in her internal affairs, which nobody here expects, Bolsheviks, after withdrawal of our troops in the spring, must inevitably dominate whatever Government may survive at Tehran, together with a great part of country.

Is it conceivable that such a Government would be allowed by their masters to renew any sort of agreement with Great Britain, to accept British money, or to engage British advisers? Of course, if southern portion of country were to be saved from Bolsheviks and some sort of independent Government set up there under our auspices, the plan recommended by Government of India might be carried out in those regions. I understand, however, proposals in question to be intended to apply to a united Persia, and in any case feel sure that a . . .² far-reaching scheme such as that contemplated by Anglo-Persian agreement, could be successfully applied to any part of country which remained under British influence.

(Sent to India.)

¹ No. 634.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'more'.

No. 643

*Lord Chelmsford to Mr. Montagu (Received January 10, 6 p.m.)*¹

No. 44 S Telegraphic [E 646/2/34]

Clear the line

January 10, 1921

Minister Teheran's telegram of 9th January, 20.² It is not for us to intervene, but we cannot help feeling that Persia's best chance is to gamble on the sincerity of Soviet proposals (*vide* our telegram of the 5th January, 23 S.)³ and for Persian Government (even if Shah cannot be induced to do so) to stay (? in) Teheran up to last. Departure of Government from Teheran would be surely preliminary to setting up of some form of Soviet Government there by Persians themselves.

Effect of Persia's collapse on Afghanistan and our present negotiations with Afghanistan would be very difficult to forecast. Much would depend on attendant circumstances. On the one hand it might impress Afghanistan with irresistible sweep of Bolshevism and our own (? impotence). On the other hand, it might open Amir's eyes to the imperative necessity of excluding Bolshevism in any form from his own country.⁴

(Repeated to Minister at Teheran and Baghdad).

¹ A copy of this telegram was received in the Foreign Office from the India Office on Jan. 14.

² The reference appears to be to No. 642.

³ No. 634.

⁴ In his telegram No. 25 of Jan. 11 (not printed) Mr. Norman commented: 'I agree to paragraph 1 but it is a very poor chance for Persia herself and British interests there if utterances of Bolshevik agents everywhere indicate real intentions of Russian Soviet Government.'

No. 644

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 13, 10 a.m.)

*No. 27 Telegraphic [E 621/221/34]**

Confidential. Clear the line

TEHRAN, January 12, 1921, 5.20 p.m.

My telegram No. 20.¹

Shah told me yesterday that, as he found most people whom he had consulted opposed to plan of transferring Government immediately to Shiraz, he had given up the idea. As regards himself, however, seeing that His Majesty's Government had refused to allow him to go to Europe for his health, leaving Vali Ahd² as regent, and that he could not bear to remain at Tehran under constant threat of attack by Bolsheviks, he was resolved to abdicate and quit the country as a private individual. He would make known his decision in the first instance privately to a small assembly of notables, and shortly afterwards publish it.

¹ Of Jan. 9, not printed. In this Mr. Norman reported that on Jan. 8 the Persian Prime Minister had conveyed a message from the Shah 'that he had decided to move Government to Shiraz, by way of Ispahan, and that if I would not consent to this he was resolved to flee to Mesopotamia one of these nights'.

² The text as sent read: 'the Valiahd'; see No. 626, n. 4.

He had tried to persuade Vali Ahd to accept the succession, but the latter had refused. He would try again, but even if he was unsuccessful, that would not change his purpose. His youngest brother might be put on the throne, or country might become a republic. I repeated all the arguments, remonstrances, threats and appeals which I had used at my two previous audiences, but as I expected, totally failed to move Shah, my influence over whom is quickly diminishing now that he knows that British troops are to be withdrawn, and that therefore I can no longer guarantee him any protection.

He begged me to try to induce you to sanction his departure on plea of ill-health, but I replied that I felt sure you would not reverse your decision, and that I would not even ask you to do so. I would, however, report what he had said. He said that he would wait four days for your reply.

Prime Minister has seen Shah to-day, and as soon as I have learnt result of interview and discussed question again with the former, I shall report once more to your Lordship.

If, as I fear, it proves impossible to turn Shah from his purpose, it is indispensable that another member of family should be put in his place, for proclamation of a republic would have disastrous consequences.

(Sent to India, No. 27; Bagdad, No. 12. Copy to Kazvin.)

No. 645

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 22 Telegraphic [E 584/221/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 13, 1921, 2.15 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 16 of 8th January.¹

It is important to keep Shah on the throne, if possible, because dynastic change would add unnecessary complications. If, however, he is unreasonable I would unhesitatingly pursue course outlined in final paragraph of your telegram No. 14 of 7th January.²

A firm attitude may, as on a former occasion when Shah was about to abandon the capital, help to bring him to reason.

¹ No. 641.

² No. 638.

No. 646

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 23 Telegraphic [E 458/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 13, 1921, 3.5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 11 of 6th January.¹

I am doing my utmost with Chancellor of Exchequer to secure continued maintenance of South Persia Rifles at any rate until 31st March, to which

¹ No. 635.

date India Office have agreed conditionally on Treasury accepting a moiety. Hitherto Treasury have twice refused to entertain the idea but I am making personal representations in the matter.

With regard to paragraph 6, Rotstein is an arch intriguer, who was expelled from England,² and who is still maintaining a son as his correspondent or agent in this country. A separate telegram will shortly be addressed to you containing a brief account of Rotstein for confidential information of Sipahdar.³ Your advice to Prime Minister on this subject was judicious.

In draft agreement about Russian trade, which M. Krassin is taking back with him to Moscow, a clause has been inserted especially prohibiting Soviet propaganda and hostilities in Persia,⁴ and His Majesty's Government have never wavered from their intention to insist upon this condition. It is, however, too early at present to say whether this agreement will or will not be signed by the Soviet Government.

² See Vol. XII, No. 765.

³ No. 28 of Jan. 13, not printed.

⁴ See Vol. VIII, Introductory Note to Chap. XV, p. 870; also *The Times*, Jan. 25, 1921, p. 12.

No. 647

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 24 Telegraphic [E 473/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 13, 1921, 3.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 10 of 6th January:¹ Medjliss.

I am inclined to share your view regarding action of Medjliss. In any case, words of Prime Minister do not fundamentally affect the position. The time limit which I have given the Persian Government on various occasions for acceptance of the agreement by the Medjliss, viz., 31st December, has expired. I do not, however, see any necessity to inform Persian Government officially that His Majesty's Government regard the agreement as at an end. We signed it and were prepared to carry it out. The Persians, however, put it in abeyance, in which state it is at present, and to judge by all the omens is likely to remain.

¹ No. 637.

No. 648

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 14, 10.45 a.m.)

*No. 29 Telegraphic [E 667/2/34]**

Urgent

TEHRAN, *January 13, 1921, 6 p.m.*

Present Persian Government would doubtless have been able to assemble Medjliss and to obtain acceptance by it of Anglo-Persian Agreement if things had gone smoothly after removal of Russian officers from Cossack division, but Prime Minister's moderate capacity is unequal to situation produced by approaching departure of British troops.

This withdrawal of country's sole protection against Bolsheviks has lately driven him to seek support of demagogues, who profess to see Persia's salvation in an agreement with Russian Soviet Government, and of ignorant masses who follow their lead.

Negotiations now in progress at Moscow have gained a high reputation for him amongst these people, but he has lost confidence of upper and official classes.

Members of his Cabinet, too, complain that he does not consult them, and some of them are intriguing against him.

He honestly means to open Medjliss as soon as quorum is obtained, but it is doubtful whether in present circumstances deputies will have the courage to attend in face of intimidation to which they are likely to be exposed.

Crisis produced by attitude of Shah, which must quickly become acute, will also demand firm handling.

I impressed on Prime Minister once more to-day necessity of energy, and begged him to strengthen Government.

He suggested means of attaining this result, one being inclusion of Nosret-ed-Dowleh in Cabinet, which I had already advocated.

Latter is expected to arrive in a few days, and I shall at once discuss situation with him with a view to decide whether it will suffice in the interests of order to reconstruct present Government, or whether it will be necessary to put another in its place.

As I gather that His Majesty's Government are no better satisfied with present Cabinet than they were with the last, I presume they will raise no objection if it is decided to follow latter course.

I may add that a possible ministerial combination, which is being widely recommended at present, is that of Farman Farma, who, though unpopular, has intelligence, energy and experience, and Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek, who is still a popular favourite.¹

(Repeated to India, Bagdad, No. 15; copy to Kazvin.)

¹ For Farman Farma, see No. 466, n. 5, and for Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek No. 492. Lord Curzon commented: 'Mr. Norman has now accomplished the complete circle, having come back to one of the corrupt Triumvirate of the Sir P. Cox days! No further triumph is possible. C 14/1'

No. 649

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 16, 7 p.m.)

*No. 31 Telegraphic [E 715/2/34]**

TEHRAN, *January 14 [15],¹ 1921, 10 a.m.*

My telegram No. 11.²

Prime Minister has shown me reply which he has sent to the proposals of the Soviet Government.

In the main it follows my recommendations, but I felt bound to remonstrate against its unnecessarily deferential tone.

¹ The copy of this telegram in the Tehran archives is dated Jan. 15.

² No. 635.

It contains besides the following objectionable features:—

It implies that the withdrawal of British troops is the result of Prime Minister's skilful diplomacy and states that we have promised to remove them even before spring if the Soviet Government will also recall theirs. It also expresses confidence that pending the departure of the latter the former will not threaten Resht and Enzeli.

I pointed out that it was false to say that such a promise had been given, and said that our troops would in no case move before April. I further declined even to suggest to General Officer Commanding Norperforce that he should cease to threaten Bolsheviks. His action must be dictated by military considerations alone, and if these rendered it desirable to continue Bolshevik enemy (*sic*)³ he would be authorised to do so.

Prime Minister said that the phrases of which I had complained were merely intended to dispose Soviet Government to accept amendments to treaty which he had demanded, and that Bolshevik troops would in fact themselves be unable to leave before spring.

Soviet envoy, contrary to my advice, is invited to come at once, but I have made Prime Minister send a supplementary telegram saying that he must wait till the treaty is signed. I said that I could not answer for the attitude of our troops if he arrived before their departure.

Language regarding cancellation of Russian concessions in spite of explanations of Prime Minister also appears to me unsatisfactory from point of view of British interests, and I again reserved our rights in this respect.

I pointed out that the reply contains no mention of acceptance of treaty by the Medjliss which is so strongly insisted on in the case of Anglo-Persian Agreement, and also that, whereas provision is made for its ratification within three months, it is to come into force as soon as it is signed. Prime Minister replied that an attack by Bolsheviks, if treaty were not signed at once, was so imminent that he dared not make any stipulation which would guarantee this.⁴ If, however, Soviet Government still insisted on article providing for propagation of socialism in Persia, Persian Government would refuse, whatever the consequences.

Reply authorises Mustaufi-ul-Mamelek⁵ to negotiate treaties with Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Tone of reply shows how far Prime Minister has lately fallen under influence of demagogues (see my telegram No. 29),⁶ and how greatly our influence here has already waned owing to approaching withdrawal of our support.

Translation by bag.⁷

(Sent to India; copy to Bagdad and Kasvin.)

³ The text as sent here read: 'to bomb the enemy'.

⁴ The text as sent here read: 'would involve delay'.

⁵ The text as sent here read: 'Mushaver-ul-Mamalek'.

⁶ No. 648.

⁷ Received on March 22 as enclosure in Tehran despatch No. 12 of Jan. 15, not printed.

No. 650

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 18, 12.45 p.m.)

*No. 30 Telegraphic [E 859/2/34]**

TEHRAN, January 15, 1921, 10 a.m.

My telegram No. 12.¹

Persian Government have received telegram from Mushavir-ul-Mamalek complaining that British interference is hindering Russo-Persia[n] agreement and prolonging misfortunes of Persia.

He states that Soviet Government are offended by slight encouragement given to their advances by Persian Government, that these advances are in the nature of an ultimatum, and that if Persia is entirely subservient to Great Britain she can hope for nothing from Russia.

He adds that Russian commander of Caucasus army has been instructed to dissolve Gilan Communist Republic, that delegates of that republic have not been allowed to proceed to Moscow, but that withdrawal of Bolshevik troops is out of the question as long as British troops are on Hamadan-Kasvin line. Possession of Baku and its oil is a vital necessity to Russia, who fears British may seize Enzeli and threaten Baku. (His Majesty's Government may perhaps think it worth while to reassure Soviet Government on this point.)

He asserts that Russians intended to remove their troops, leaving only one ship to guard entrance to port of Enzeli, but that they abandoned this plan owing to report that British intended to reoccupy Batoum.

He states that a conference of Russian, Ottoman, Armenian and Azerbaijan representatives is shortly to be held at Moscow.

Translation by bag.²

(Sent to India; copy to Bagdad, High Commissioner and General Officer Commanding and Kazvin.)

¹ Of Jan. 6, not printed.

² Under cover of Tehran despatch No. 13 of Jan. 16, received March 22, not printed.

No. 651

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 16, 12.30 p.m.)

*No. 34 Telegraphic [E 718/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, January 15, 1921, 5.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 32.¹

Shah told me to-day that as soon as his intention to leave Tehran had become known deputations from all classes of the population had waited on him to express devotion to his person and to beg him not to go. He had been greatly encouraged by these manifestations, because they showed that his policy of deference to Great Britain has not made him as unpopular as he

¹ Of Jan. 14, not printed.

had feared and that people themselves realised that British help was necessary to Persia, and he was now firmly resolved to remain.

His Majesty told me that within the last two or three days the Prime Minister had twice tendered his resignation, and, though it had not been accepted, had retired to his country house.

He also said that at a meeting of ex-Prime Ministers, over which he had presided this morning, the opinion has been expressed that the situation required a stronger man at the head of affairs.

He therefore wished to know whether I insisted on retaining present Government in power.

For reasons given in my telegram No. 29,² I replied that I shared view expressed at the meeting, and that if Sipahdar was really anxious to resign I would not hinder him; I would, however, take no action which could give him reason to complain that I had played him false, so must have a definite assurance that he wished to leave office.

Shah said that in the circumstances there could be no question of such a complaint, and that he himself was willing to assume full responsibility in the matter.

He was strongly of the opinion that the moment had come for the appointment of a popular Prime Minister, more especially since there was nothing in the policy which His Majesty's Government wished Persian Government to pursue that such a statesman could not carry out with a good conscience and at the same time with a better hope of success than Sipahdar, who was handicapped by his reputation for subserviency to the Legation.

We discussed various substitutes for the present Government, and finally, on my recommendation, agreed on the combination mentioned in the last paragraph of my telegram No. 29, with the possible addition of Ain-ed-Dowleh, who, like Farman Farma, is believed to be willing to serve under Mustaufi-ul-Mamalck, and who has, unlike him, additional advantage of having always kept in touch with the Nationalists.

I emphasised the necessity of convoking³ the Medjliss, regarding which Shah agreed, adding that, in his opinion, the Anglo-Persian Agreement should be presented as soon as possible to that assembly, which could not fail to accept it with certain modifications, since Persia cannot dispense with the support of Great Britain and must offer the latter some advantage in exchange.

As your Lordship is aware, I myself think there is little chance that Medjliss will take this course unless guaranteed by projected Anglo-Russian Treaty against vengeance of Bolsheviks.

Shah will see to-morrow first Sipahdar and then Mustaufi, and I shall also get into touch with the latter, and hope to ascertain his programme with a view to submitting it to your Lordship.

Shah was in high spirits and discussed the matter with a keener interest than I have ever seen him show in affairs of State.

² No. 648.

³ The text as sent read: 'the necessity of avoiding further delay in summoning'.

No. 652

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 30 Telegraphic [E 667/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 15, 1921, 6 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 29 of 13th January.¹

I approve your proposal to consult Prince Firouz.²

The advent of a strong Cabinet would be welcome, either for purpose of conducting the affairs of the country from Tehran or, should evacuation of the capital become necessary, to provide a rallying point at Ispahan.

¹ No. 648.

² In his telegram No. 58 of Jan. 23 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported that Nosret-ed-Dowleh (i.e. Prince Firuz) had telegraphed from Kermanshah on Jan. 13 'asking me to prevent situation here from developing till he had had time to discuss it with me'. Mr. Norman had replied begging him to hasten his arrival but reported: 'He has nevertheless since then twice postponed his departure, and now proposes only to start 24th January, and to stay on his way at his house near Kangvar and at Hamadan.'

No. 653

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 31 Telegraphic [E 788/25/34]

Urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 15, 1921, 6 p.m.*

My telegram No. 23 (of January 13th).¹

(South Persia Rifles).

Treasury sanction up to March 31st has been obtained.

¹ No. 646.

No. 654

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 33 Telegraphic [E 550/221/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 18, 1921, 2 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 14 (of January 7th) received January 11th.¹

You will have seen from my telegram No. 22 (of January 13th) my views regarding possible abdication of Shah² and before considering that point further I await report promised in penultimate paragraph of your telegram No. 27 (of January 12th).³

We must now consider possible movements of Legation should withdrawal from Teheran become necessary. The Shah was apparently main opponent of removal of Government to Isfahan whereas Prime Minister did not view that city with disfavour (see your telegram No. 17 of January 8th).⁴

¹ No. 638.

² No. 645.

³ No. 644.

⁴ No. 640.

It is essential that you and your staff should keep in touch with such Persian Cabinet as may be in power and if they leave the capital you should accompany them. It would obviously be less detrimental to our interests and good name not to retire south to Shiraz but only to Isfahan the ancient capital with which place, moreover, Bakhtiari road furnishes additional means of communication. If and when, therefore, Persian Government decide to quit Teheran, you should urge them to establish themselves at Isfahan.

In view of present unsatisfactory attitude of Bakhtiari (see your telegram No. 17 of January 8th),⁴ it occurs to me that presence of Major Noel⁵ in that part of country may have steadying effect. I am asking India Office to instruct him to start without delay and place himself under your orders.

Should Persian Government proceed to Isfahan, presence there of portion of South Persian Rifles would presumably be desirable, and I am also addressing India Office on this subject. I shall be glad of your views.⁶

⁵ H.M. Vice-Consul at Ahwaz.

⁶ In his telegram No. 128 of Feb. 26 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported a request from the Persian Government that 1,000 South Persia Rifles be moved to Isfahan. In view of the last paragraph of the foregoing telegram and of proposals by the Persian Government to take over the Force on a reduced scale of expenditure, he had asked the Inspector-General to detail 1,000 men for the purpose.

No. 655

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 20, 1 p.m.)

*No. 39 Telegraphic [E 958/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, January 19, 1921, 6 a.m.

My telegram No. 34.¹

Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek reluctantly undertook, on 16th January, the task of forming a Government, and sent me on next morning a message to the effect that if he did so he would feel unable to submit Anglo-Persian Agreement to Medjliss.

I replied that I had no authority to discuss abandonment of agreement.

In the event, he told Shah what had passed, and added that if he became Prime Minister he proposed to postpone the assembly of Medjliss. Shah sent his private secretary to me this morning to say that he had expressed to Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek his surprise at latter's message to me, and at his statement of his intention regarding Medjliss, and had withdrawn from him the commission to form a Government.

Shah asked me whom I would advise him to summon instead, and suggested that he should ask Sipahdar to resume office with a strengthened Cabinet.

I said that as I was no longer in a position to afford material help to keep any Prime Minister in power, I could not take responsibility of making a recommendation. Future Persian Government must depend exclusively on support which they could obtain from Persians themselves.

¹ No. 651.

Private secretary asked me to take twenty-four hours to reflect, and I promised to do so, though I have no intention of returning any other answer.² Any statesman now selected for office on my recommendation would be known as candidate of Legation, and now that I am to lose moral force which I have hitherto derived from presence of British troops, I could not keep him in power in face of attacks which would immediately be made on him by the Opposition. Further blow would thus be dealt to already damaged prestige of Legation.

(Sent to India.)

² In his telegram No. 43 of Jan. 20 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported that the Shah had that morning again sent his private secretary 'to whom I once more explained my reasons for refusing to interfere with the choice of a Prime Minister'.

No. 656

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 21, 12 noon)

*No. 41 Telegraphic [E 1009/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, January 19, 1921, 11.40 a.m.

My telegram No. 38.¹

General Officer Commanding Norperforce this morning attended a meeting at which, besides myself, the United States, Belgian, French and Russian representatives were present, and, after a statement of situation from military point of view, explained arrangements which he would be able to make for evacuation of foreign communities. In his opinion, which I share, withdrawal of his force will at once be followed by advance on Kazvin and Tehran of Bolshevik troops, now in Ghilan, who call themselves Persian national army, and who, thanks to recent reinforcements, amount to about 6,000 men, including, however, only 400 Russians.

He is convinced that Russian Soviet Government will be unable, even if they are willing, to prevent advance of these troops and that a revolution will break out in the capital either before or on arrival of latter.

Question of measures to be taken will of course have to be discussed with new Government as soon as there is one, but I see at present no reason to believe that any Persian Cabinet, however strong or popular, will be able without a trustworthy force, or money enough to pay that which they have, . . .² to cope either with external or internal danger.

(Copies to Bagdad and Kazvin; repeated to India.)

¹ Not printed; see No. 660 below, n. 2.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'as this one must be,'.

No. 657

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 21, 12.20 p.m.)

*No. 45 Telegraphic [E 1008/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, January 20, 1921, 2.35 a.m.

Your telegram No. 33.¹

Question of Shah's attitude is, I hope, settled, at least for some time to come (see my telegram No. 34),² that of possible transfer of Government to Ispahan would be one of first to be discussed with new Cabinet as soon as it is formed, and if an arrangement is made with Bakhtiari it may be possible to allay apprehensions of Shah sufficiently to induce him to withdraw his objections to plan. Since my telegram No. 17 was despatched³ Khans have made overtures, regarding which I will report to your Lordship and in due course to His Majesty's consul-general, Ispahan, so it may after all be possible to reach a satisfactory agreement with them if His Majesty's Government are prepared to find the money.

I am very grateful for loan of Major Noel and also for your Lordship's adoption of the suggestion contained in my telegram No. 17 regarding despatch of some of the South Persia Rifles to Ispahan, which would probably do more than anything else to reconcile Shah to going there. If, however, this plan is to succeed it will be necessary to continue to pay that force beyond 31st March, as otherwise its disbandment will have to begin long before that date, because it would not only be unjust to men but dangerous to security of Fars and Kerman to throw them suddenly out of their employment.

(Sent to India; copy to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

¹ No. 654.

² No. 651.

³ No. 640.

No. 658

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 29,¹ 11.45 a.m.)

*No. 46 Telegraphic [E 1355/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, January 20, 1921, 5.30 p.m.

My telegrams Nos. 31 and 41.²

Russian Soviet Government are stated here to have sent to Gilan a senior officer for real, though not ostensible, purpose of organising Persian national army, so that it may be ready to begin its march on Tehran as soon as British troops are withdrawn.

It is also persistently reported from various sources that 30,000 Bolshevik troops are being concentrated at Baku for invasion of Persia in spring.

Soviet Government allege as reason for their refusal to withdraw Bolshevik

¹ According to a minute on the file by Mr. Churchill this telegram 'though marked "very urgent" took 9 days. . . . Enquiries elicit the fact that the delay occurred in India.'

² Nos. 649 and 656.

forces now in Gilan, before departure of Norperforce, fear that the latter will attack Baku. It seems so absurd to suppose that such attack could be made from Kasvin by a small force based on Bagdad and unprovided with maritime transport, that it is impossible not to conclude that this reason is a mere pretext.

Would it not nevertheless be feasible for His Majesty's Government to use opportunity afforded by negotiations now in progress, in order to induce Soviet Government at once to begin to withdraw [the withdrawal],³ by offering a guarantee that from time when they begin retirement [to retire]³ they will no longer be molested, that Norperforce will not advance beyond, say, its present position, and that Baku will not be attacked?

Your telegram No. 3 suggested that Persian Government themselves should offer such a guarantee on behalf of His Majesty's Government,⁴ but it now seems clear that no assurance given by them carries any weight at Moscow.

It is of course doubtful, as General Officer Commanding Norperforce has pointed out, whether Soviet Government can control Persian national army,⁵ but if they can do so they must surely accept proposed arrangement, rejection of which would furnish evident proof of bad faith.

Matter is important because such a withdrawal would transform situation here, though there would, of course, be nothing to prevent Bolshevik troops from again landing at Enzeli as soon as Norperforce has left Persia. Even if that happened, however, some time would have been gained.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Norperforce.)

³ Wording in the text as sent from Tehran.

⁴ No. 629.

⁵ See No. 656.

No. 659

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 39 Telegraphic [E 958/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 21, 1921, 12.50 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 39 of 19th January.¹

I realise difficult position in which impending withdrawal of troops places His Majesty's Legation. It is, however, most desirable that Persian Government should not think that we are entirely indifferent to their future. You should, whenever possible, continue to use your influence to secure creation of strong Government which, either at Tehran or in the event of withdrawal at Ispahan, would be likely to work in co-operation with you, even though at present time we have little but our past help and interest in Persia as assets.

¹ No. 655.

No. 660

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [Confidential/General/363/19]

Private

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 21, 1921, 1.5 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 40¹ and other telegrams.²

We cannot understand here why there should be a general *sauf qui peut* at Teheran. Shah, who is the most timid man in Persia, has decided to stay. A Persian Government is about to be formed. It has concluded, or is on the verge of concluding, a treaty with the Bolsheviks. Why then should the latter invade Persia or attack the capital? Why should there be a general scuttle from Teheran? It may be that our interests would be better served by a Persian Government acting under our influence at Ispahan or elsewhere. But you do not appear to regard this solution as likely. Will not damage to our prestige, of which you complain, only be enhanced by a precipitate retreat and abandonment of whole of Northern Persia to an enemy, whose advance is by no means certain, and a revolution which can probably still be avoided?³

¹ Of Jan. 19, not printed. This reported that the Imperial Bank of Persia had received instructions from their London office to leave Tehran before the withdrawal of Norperforce and that they had almost entirely suspended their operations.

² e.g. Nos. 37 and 38 of Jan. 18 (not printed) which referred to the questions of evacuating the staff of H.M. Legation and the European communities from Tehran.

³ In his telegram No. 40 of Jan. 21 (not printed) Lord Curzon informed Mr. Norman that he was enquiring whether the Imperial Bank of Persia could make more adequate arrangements. 'In the meanwhile should no instructions reach chief manager of bank at Tehran before 31st January, or if the financial situation renders it impossible for bank to maintain itself in the capital, I consider that such conditions would render withdrawal to Ispahan inevitable. But in that case it would be to the interest of the Persian Government of the day to retire similarly to Ispahan, in order to avoid financial ruin. We do not quite understand, however, why universal flight is thought to be necessary.' Foreign Office telegram No. 42 of the same day to Tehran was a message from the Chairman of the Imperial Bank of Persia for the Manager instructing him to 'remain in Tehran to function on such a reduced scale as will provide facilities to Legation, telegraphs, etc. and permit continuity of commerce. So long as our vital interests are not endangered, we should not like to fail Persian Government at vital moment if presence of bank in Tehran can help to avert disintegration.'

No. 661

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 44 Telegraphic [E 929/2/34]

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 22, 1921, 2.50 p.m.*

Your telegrams No. 36 of 17th January¹ and No. 45 of 20th January:² South Persia Rifles.

I fully realise the extreme desirability, both from the local point of view and from that of British interests in Persia, of maintaining the South Persia Rifles in a state of reasonable efficiency. But the financial position here is

¹ Not printed.

² No. 657.

such that I have had the greatest difficulty in securing payment of the force even up to 31st March, and I am unable to press His Majesty's Government or Government of India any further in the matter, even though consequences of non-payment of force be such as foreseen by you.³

In view, however, of the fact that financial adviser recently secured considerable sums from Anglo-Persian Oil Company,⁴ Persian Government should be urged to allocate a part of these funds to maintenance of at least portion of this force, which may turn out to be only stable element in the country. It is difficult to understand a state of incapacity and collapse so complete that no organisation for national defence can be kept in existence unless it is paid for from outside.

(Repeated to India.)

³ Nevertheless, in a private telegram of Feb. 23 (not printed), Lord Curzon told Mr. Norman that he was 'again endeavouring to induce Treasury to meet expenses of South Persia Rifles for a further period' and had some hope of succeeding. See No. 698 below.

⁴ See Nos. 608 and 625.

No. 662

*Lord Chelmsford to Mr. Montagu (Received January 22, 5.40 p.m.)*¹

No. 107 S Telegraphic [E 1196/2/34]

Clear the line

January 22, 1921

Your telegram of 18th January, 389,² Persia. It is very difficult for us to form any useful opinion on the various measures proposed by the Minister and Foreign Office. At this distance we are not in a position to judge how far the desirability of taking precautionary measures should override necessity for avoiding anything calculated to create a premature panic. But we regard Teheran as the pivot of the situation, and to us the immediate danger appears to be in the precipitation of the crisis by overhasty action at Teheran, and the abandonment of Teheran before the withdrawal of our troops. Hence the view we have already expressed, that the Persian Government should be induced in its own interests (as well as ours) to stand fast in Teheran to the last possible moment.³ Similarly, we think that the Imperial Bank should be induced in their own interests (as well as ours) to stand fast likewise.

Indeed, given fundamental facts that our troops are to be withdrawn in April, and that Persia herself has no force to oppose military aggression, Persian Government, if it is to avoid suicide, appears to have no option but to remain in Teheran, and gamble on sincerity of Bolshevik assurance that they will not invade Persia in the event of our withdrawal.

If the Persian Government can weather the storm at Teheran till the beginning of April, this may give time for the pendulum of Persian public

¹ A copy of this telegram was received in the Foreign Office from the India Office on Jan. 26.

² Not printed. This had asked for the Viceroy's views on Nos. 628 and 640.

³ See No. 643.

opinion to swing once again in our favour. One great obstacle to this is the universal misconception of the motive underlying the Anglo-Persian Agreement. The fact that it has not been placed before Majlis by stipulated date gives us the opportunity of withdrawing our offer under it with good grace.

Hence we urge that no time should be lost in disavowing the agreement publicly, and in seeing to it that our disavowal is published throughout Persia. Herein lies, in our view, the best chance of starting revulsion of public opinion in our favour, and consequently of providing proper antidote to Bolshevik propaganda, which at present draws most of its force in Persia from Bolsheviks being able to pose as deliverers of Persia and Islam generally from British domination. It seems to us essential that we should seize every possible opportunity of working back to our old rôle of champions of Islam against the Russian Ogre. At present the rôles are reversed, and our position not only in Persia but throughout Middle East is one of greatest difficulty in consequence. Scrapping of Anglo-Persian Agreement would go far to right the matter, especially if combined with drastic readjustment of Turkish Treaty.⁴ There are still plenty of elements in Persia tribal, religious, landed and even nationalist, with whom mistrust of Russia is ingrained, to whom Bolshevik practice would be repugnant, and who, given a change of attitude on our part, would soon see through Bolshevik professions of friendship. But without stimulus of such a change of attitude on our part Persian revulsion against Bolshevism might come too late for us.

Unpleasant though Bolshevism up to our border would be, it is to us questionable whether it would be more dangerous than the present position when, in spite of our assurance and propaganda, British attitude in Persia is regarded in Moslem Asia, especially in Afghanistan and largely in Moslem India, as another example of Britain's crushing of Islam, thus providing Bolshevik propaganda with arguments ready made. Similarly, as far as we can at present foresee, it would probably have equally bad effect on India for Persia to split up into a Soviet Government in the north, and a Shah Government, supported or dominated by Britain in the south.

In such an event, moreover, it is difficult to believe that we should not soon be confronted in the south with the same sort of crisis as the present.

His Majesty's Government are in a better position than ourselves to foresee serious entanglements, financial and military, to which such a policy would almost certainly commit them.

In any case we must reiterate the impossibility of our accepting any share whatever in the financial burden under it.

In short, we believe that there is still chance of saving situation, provided Persian Government stands fast in Teheran, and provided we cut ground from under Bolshevism by scrapping Anglo-Persian Agreement and repudiating Turkish Treaty. Without these provisos, it seems that in the end protection of British interests will have to be confined to those in the oil-fields and along Persian Gulf.

⁴ The reference is to the agitation for revision of the Treaty of Sèvres; see Chap. I above, especially Nos. 186, 194, 200.

We have called on Meshed, &c., for appreciations of the immediate effects of withdrawing from Teheran, and will telegraph again on their receipt.⁵

Dobb's [*sic*]⁶ views on the probable effect on Afghanistan are still awaited.⁷ Repeated to Teheran and Baghdad.

⁵ The Viceroy did so in his telegram No. 115 S of Jan. 24, not printed.

⁶ Major H. Dobbs was Foreign Secretary to the Government of India.

⁷ In the course of a minute dated Jan. 27 Mr. G. P. Churchill drew attention to Mr. Lloyd George's speech in the House of Commons on Dec. 15, 1920 (see 136 *H.C. Deb.* 5 s., cols. 584-5) in which he said: 'If the Anglo-Persian Agreement is not ratified, if they do not take steps in that direction, it naturally falls to the ground. It is their action, not ours; but having signed it we are bound to stand by it. If they do not carry out their part—and there does not seem to be any alacrity about it with them—very well, then, the responsibility is not ours. Great Britain, however, must not give the impression that she is trying to get out of her agreements. Her character in the East, even more than in the West, depends upon the fact that she stands upon her bond. That is the position so far as Persia is concerned.' In a comment on the same file two days later Lord Curzon wrote as follows: 'Considering that the Govt. of India decline to take the slightest interest in Persia, have steadily opposed the Anglo-Persian agreement from the start, cut off their expenditure there without even a reference to us, and wash their hands of all responsibility—I regard the advice with which they so liberally regale us as an impertinence and would not pay it the compliment of a reply.'

No. 663

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 25, 3.10 p.m.)

*No. 56 Telegraphic [E 1188/2/34]**

Urgent

TEHRAN, January 24, 1921, 5.30 p.m.

Your telegram No. 39¹ and my telegram No. 51.²

In speaking to Sipahdar to-day I was guided by your instructions and impressed on him the fact that withdrawal of British troops and inability of His Majesty's Government to provide money did not indicate loss of their interest in Persia or any unwillingness on my own part to co-operate with any strong and friendly Persian Government in their attempt to save the country.

I begged him to show firmness by at once arresting and deporting from the capital all dangerous characters as a measure which would contribute more than any other to restoration of public confidence. He said that he had received from the Shah full powers to do this, and would use them.

I also urged him to summon Medjliss, seeing that necessary number of deputies were at last present. He replied that required proclamation would be issued on 26th January and Assembly opened a week later. I added that Government should inform me as soon as possible of their wishes and intentions regarding Anglo-Persian Agreement, and he said that a commission consisting of deputies and others would at once be formed to examine question and report on modifications considered desirable.

¹ No. 659.

² Of Jan. 22, not printed. In this Mr. Norman reported that after his last interview with Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek the Shah had asked Sipahdar to resume office with a reorganized Cabinet.

So far as I can foresee chief of these is likely to be substitution for British officers in Persian army of nationals of a third Power, and, if this demand is made and accepted by His Majesty's Government, I should be disposed to suggest Belgian officers as being probably most efficient amongst those to whom there would be no political objection.

I was warned, soon after my arrival, that a strong feeling existed against employment of British officers, which is regarded by many as equivalent to a complete surrender to British domination, and Mushir-ed-Dowleh himself once told me that this was change in agreement to which public most objected, and asked me whether there was any chance that His Majesty's Government would renounce it, but at that time I scouted the idea and subject was dropped.

Sipahdar, who is personally anxious to employ British officers, mentioned the matter to-day, suggesting that others might be engaged for two years to give time for feeling against British to die down.

Sipahdar of course urged the need for immediate formation of defensive force and for money to organise it under auspices of Lieutenant-Colonel Smyth, British officer who has for past two months or so been unofficially and almost secretly working amongst Cossacks, with result that their efficiency has been greatly increased. I could hold out no prospect that any money would be forthcoming beyond what remains of sum recently obtained from Anglo-Persian Oil Company, but bearing in mind your telegram No. 19 of 9th [10th] January³ [suggested]⁴ that later on a private loan might be obtained in return for certain concessions if Medjliss were willing to approve them.

Need for money will indeed soon be more pressing and consequences of its absence more dangerous than ever before, but I can see no way of obtaining it in time to save situation.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

³ Not printed.

⁴ This additional word was in the text as sent from Tehran.

No. 664

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 50 Telegraphic [E 1188/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *January 25, 1921, 7 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 56 of 24th January.¹

It is no use thinking about modifications of the agreement at this late hour.

We still hold the view contained in our telegram No. 24 of 13th January.²

Proposal to engage Belgians to reorganise army is useless from the practical point of view, and should not be encouraged.

¹ No. 663.

² No. 647.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 26)

*Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 1226/2/34]**

Private. Urgent

TEHRAN, January 25, 1921

Your private telegram of 21st January.¹

Though it is doubtless easier in London than here to take a dispassionate view of situation, I have unintentionally misled you if I have given impression that panic is universal or that it prevails at this Legation. On the contrary, every member of the latter is doing his best to exercise steady influence, and there is nothing to complain of in the attitude of other foreign missions.

Nevertheless, I strongly share opinion of General Officer Commanding Norperforce that all women, &c., should be sent away as soon as possible as a measure of precaution.

It is true that the Shah has, though with great difficulty, been persuaded to remain for the present, but his fears are by no means allayed; and I greatly doubt whether, unless events take favourable turn, it will be possible to restrain him from flight before departure of British troops. I have seen him to-day and done my best to encourage him.

Reasons for such apprehensions as exist are:—

1. Belief of some, including General Officer Commanding Norperforce, that even if Perso-Soviet treaty is signed invasion will take place, whether by Bolsheviks themselves or by Gangali² and other native rebels, with secret Bolshevik support.

2. Uncertainty regarding behaviour of invaders if they come.

3. Opinion, also shared by General Officer Commanding, that withdrawal of British troops will be immediately followed, even if it is not preceded, by internal revolution. This, especially if finally controlled, as it probably would be, by non-Persian Bolshevik elements, might involve danger to foreigners if, as is probable, Government are unable to suppress it. They have neither time nor money to form force for the purpose nor necessary foreign officers to train it, while only existing forces at their disposal—Cossacks, gendarmerie and police—cannot be depended upon.

It is certain that partisans of revolution are daily increasing in numbers and activity, and in the circumstances it is natural that this should be so.

4. Action of Imperial Bank of Persia (imposed by instructions received from London) and other British commercial establishments, which destroys public confidence by giving impression that all is lost and increases danger of revolution by paralysing financial and economic life of the country.

5. Pessimism of some Europeans, who should be in a position to obtain accurate information, but who spread panic instead of allaying it.

I think it essential, however, that Government and foreign missions should remain here as long as possible, and doubt whether transfer of capital to

¹ No. 660.

² In the copy of this telegram in Tehran archives this word reads: 'Jangalis'.

Ispahan would be feasible at any time. No Persian with whom I have hitherto spoken seems to believe so.

Retreat and abandonment mentioned in last sentence of your telegram are considered to be already taking place through withdrawal of British troops, coupled with action mentioned above under 4, neither of which I have any power to prevent. Logically there is much cause for alarm, but in this country of surprises nothing very terrible may happen after all.

May I suggest this telegram should be made official?³

³ In a minute dated Feb. 2 Lord Curzon said that there was no objection to making these telegrams (i.e. the foregoing and No. 660) official. He went on: 'The point in it [i.e. the above telegram] which puzzles me is his [Mr. Norman's] attempt to throw responsibility upon the Imperial Bank instigated apparently by the wicked apprehensions of H.M.G. I thought that the very reverse was the case. The responsibility for all the catastrophes that impend in Persia is that of the W[ar] O[ffice] to begin with, the I[ndia] O[ffice] in the second place and the Cabinet in the third.

'No doubt when the débâcle comes the F[oreign] O[ffice] will receive the entire blame. C 2/2.'

No. 666

*Lord Chelmsford to Mr. Montagu (Received January 27, 7 p.m.)*¹

No. 128 S Telegraphic [E 1476/2/34]

Secret

January 27, 1921

Our telegram of the 22nd January, No. 107 S.² Following is Dobbs' appreciation:—

'Whether Bolsheviks bring Persia under their influence by invasion or by propaganda resulting in republic or by making puppet of Shah at Teheran, I think consequent increase of their prestige, working on predisposition of Amir in their favour and against us, will probably make Afghanistan decide that she must at all costs keep on good terms with Bolsheviks. While in their hearts fearing the effect of Bolshevik propaganda on themselves, conceit of Afghan officials makes them flatter themselves that they can pass it on into India without contaminating Afghanistan. Another factor will be undefended state of western border of Afghanistan, and fear that Persia, when friend of Bolsheviks, will revive former claims [in the] direction of Herat and S[c]istan. I fear, therefore, that we must be prepared for the worst effect.

'I do not think we can avoid ill-consequences by attempting to buy Afghan favour, which would only confirm their present belief in our weakness and make them more intractable. They are putting forward enormous demands, and only possible means of bringing them to their senses lies, I believe, in keeping our heads high, and firm front.'

¹ A copy of this telegram was received in the Foreign Office on Feb. 2.

² No. 662.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received January 31, 10 a.m.)

*No. 66 Telegraphic [E 1382/2/34]**

TEHRAN, January 28, 1921, 11.40 a.m.

Your telegram No. 41.¹

Reference to Bakhtiari in my telegram No. 17² was rather too general. I was chiefly thinking of their attitude during the war, when nearly all sided with the enemy and only two remained entirely faithful to us.

Khans have made tentative proposals to His Majesty's consul-general at Ispahan and to me for co-operation with us in the event of collapse of Persian Government before Bolsheviks.

These suggestions involve handing over to Bakhtiari as much of Persia as can be saved from Bolsheviks with a Kajar Prince³ as a puppet Shah.

Khans have not yet decided whether they can accept the responsibility for Tehran, but maintain that, by coming to an agreement with Kashgais through Kawam-ul-Mulk, they can, with our financial support, hold Ispahan and south for us. If Tehran Government make way for a Soviet Administration—with which we are not in relations—we could perhaps satisfy Bakhtiari financially by transferring to them oil royalties at present paid to Persian Government. It would, however, also be necessary to subsidise Kawam-ul-Mulk in order to keep Fars in the scheme.

Plan entails condemning a great part—if not the whole—of Persia to most rapacious ruler⁴ which it would ever have experienced. Already Bakhtiari Governors, wherever they exist, are hated for their oppression, and if country is delivered into their hands without even such control as present Government can exercise over them, it is to be feared that their exactions will everywhere incline the people to welcome Bolsheviks, in which case, as Government of India have pointed out in their telegram to Secretary of State,⁵ we shall again be confronted in the south with problem which will have baffled us in the north.

Bakhtiari Government will also mean the end of all attempt to reform Persian Administration.

Bakhtiari[s] are essentially untrustworthy, shamelessly self-interested and so disunited that it is even uncertain how long senior khans will be able to maintain their authority over numerous younger ones, who are growing turbulent and anxious to share in spoils at present appropriated by their elders.

Any agreement of this nature would be a measure of desperation, and should, in my opinion, only be resorted to if we are actually driven out of Tehran. In anticipation, however, of such an eventuality, it is important that I should be . . .⁶ as soon as possible whether His Majesty's Government

¹ Of Jan. 21, not printed.

² No. 640.

³ i.e. a member of the then ruling dynasty.

⁴ This word read 'rule' in the text as sent from Tehran.

⁵ No. 662.

⁶ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'that I should know'.

are prepared to subsidise Kawam-ul-Mulk and to sanction transfer of oil royalties to Bakhtiari, or adequately reward them in some other way.

As regards Major Noel, see my telegram No. 45;⁷ but as most of the more important khans will be at Tehran by the time that he can reach Persia, I think that he would do well to come here as soon as possible without attempting to transact any business with such of them as he may find in Bakhtiari on his way.

(Sent to India; Kermanshah, No. 11; Ahwaz, No. 10. Copy to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

⁷ No. 657.

No. 668

*Sir P. Cox¹ (Baghdad) to Mr. Montagu
(Received February 1, 8 a.m.)²*

No. 291 S Telegraphic [E 1621/2/34]

BAGHDAD, January 29, 1921²

Your telegram of the 18th January, 389, to India.³ Persian situation. It is impossible to prophesy what precisely will ensue on the withdrawal of Norperforce, as it depends on two factors at present, i.e., firstly, whether two or three months hence Bolsheviks will have the will and ability to undertake military occupation of North Persia, and secondly, whether, in the last resort, His Majesty's Government will still be prepared to incur some further expenditure in Persia to save remnants of situation and greater loss. As regards the first problem, the agreement said to have been concluded, or on the point of being concluded, between Soviets and Persia,⁴ doubtless offers no safeguard against prosecution of Bolsheviks' programme of aggressive expansion, nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that they will proceed to extremities immediately after having concluded such an agreement with Persia, and having been deprived, by the withdrawal of the troops, of their last excuse for armed intrusion into Persia. It will be remembered that they were expected to occupy Tabriz directly it was left open, but they have not yet done so. In this connection it is worth noting that, when the first news of our intended evacuation was telegraphed by Teheran merchants to their correspondents here, general panic ensued, for it was regarded as portending loss of not less than £4,000,000 sterling to Baghdad merchants, in the shape of outstandings or stocks of merchandise left in Persia without hope of recovery. This panic, however, in a general measure subsided when it became known that Persia was on the point of concluding a treaty with the Soviets, as it was believed that such a treaty, combined with our retirement, would put an end to Bolshevik activities in Persia and reopen trade route between Baghdad and Enzeli. This is doubtless a sanguine outlook, but for many reasons it is

¹ H.M. High Commissioner in Mesopotamia; cf. No. 450 above.

² A copy was received in the Foreign Office on Feb. 4. The time of despatch is not recorded.

³ See No. 662, n. 2.

⁴ See Nos. 621, 629, and 635.

greatly to be desired that the withdrawal of Europeans from Teheran could have been postponed, or at all events left to take its natural course without pressure. It is easy to imagine the lamentable picture of apparent British impotence and collapse before the Bolshevik menace, which will be presented to the public of this region by the stream of women and children trickling down Teheran-Baghdad road, under circumstances of grave discomfort and hardship, resulting from severe winter conditions, and with our troops following on their heels. It would have been infinitely less harmful if the civilian evacuation could have been deferred, at any rate until the immediate effect of our military withdrawal, both on Bolsheviks and Teheran public, had become apparent; and then (if it were inevitable) if it could have taken the form of a gradual exodus to or *via* Ispahan in the spring. I note the reasons given by His Majesty's Minister for putting that route out of the question,⁵ but I shall venture to revert to the subject later on.

As to the question of financial assistance, I understand that His Majesty's Government have suspended all subsidies to Central Government, and intend to cease financing South Persian Rifles from 1st April.⁶ It is clear from the papers that this policy has been forced upon the Cabinet by the insistence of the public at home on drastic reduction of expenditure. But unless some alternative constructive policy can be devised to counteract its destructive effect, adoption of such a line of action will entail complete collapse of commercial position in Persia, which it has taken generations to establish. It will react, both commercially and politically, in Afghanistan and Mesopotamia, and in the latter case will greatly upset the calculations on which we have formed our Budget. It seems to amount to this: If His Majesty's Government are prepared to continue to incur certain expenditure in Persia to save remnants of our position, something can no doubt be done and is worth doing. If they are not so prepared, but insist on withholding all further financial assistance, I see no alternative but to evacuate our women and children, not only from Teheran but from all towns in Persia, and simply leave those who will not come away or whose presence until the last moment is a necessity, to await the development of chaos.

Reverting to Bolshevik menace, I am aware that there is a section of Persian public in Teheran and Gillan [*sic*] who see in Bolshevism, as they see in other forms of anarchy, golden opportunities for enriching themselves. I am convinced, however, that the people of Persia in general are not prone to welcome Bolshevism, and will hold out against it if given any solid foundation to stand on.

As regards Anglo-Persian Agreement. Fair and reasonable document as it is, it has become such a red herring to the Bolshevik and such a pretext for extremist propaganda, that I agree with the Government of India that we must drop it in its present form as a basis of policy.⁷ On the other hand, it is difficult to conceive any scheme of financial assistance calculated to save Persian situation which His Majesty's Government could be expected to enter upon without protecting themselves by some agreement of same kind.

⁵ See No. 640.

⁶ See No. 661.

⁷ See No. 662.

I now beg to (? submit) for consideration two lines of policy for adoption according to circumstances. The first is, that we should not assume that all is lost in Teheran. The trend of recent intelligence reports regarding Bolshevik plans rather indicates that they have other pre-occupations for the present. We should decide, therefore, to delay evacuation of women and children at any rate until the early summer, then if it proves . . .⁸ it should take the form of a gradual exodus to Ispahan and Shiraz, but in co-operation with Bakhtiariis. I am aware that here the main difficulty lies in the question of transport, but it seems quite possible that mule transport can be collected at Ispahan, and a convoy of vans be sent up from Bushire *via* Shiraz, on which route they would have the protection of the South Persian Rifles. Meanwhile, we should rally our adherents at the capital amongst moderate Nationalists and non-Bolshevik elements, who are convinced that the country can only be saved from anarchy with our help. We should devise another agreement which the Majlis will accept, and on basis of which His Majesty's Government will continue to help Persia. It is quite possible that such an agreement may involve our acquiescence in a change of Shah or change of dynasty, and I do not think that we should hesitate in giving it. In any case, attitude of Bakhtiariis will be an important factor, and I do not at all agree with the view expressed by His Majesty's Minister that they are essentially unfriendly.⁹ On the contrary, I believe they are fully alive to advantages of friendly relations with us, and provided their interests are safeguarded and promoted, the majority of them could be got to participate with us in any scheme for the saving of Persia from chaos.

Supposing that it is decided that . . .¹⁰ has gone too far to admit of the adoption of the above policy, or if it is tried and fails, then I think we must make up our minds to let Northern Persia go Bolshevik if it wishes to; but in that case, provided again that we are prepared to spend some money, I see no reason why we should not hope to maintain our interests and effective influence in the sphere in which they mainly exist, and which I should include by a line passing from the Persian frontier near Khanikin, through Kermanshah, Khurumabad, Ispahan, Yezd, Kerman, and so on, and I think our policy should be to stabilise situation in that area. In fact, it seems to me impossible that we can do otherwise than endeavour to ensure safety of our numerous and vital oil interests in this part of Persia, namely, near Qasr-i-Shirin, in Pushtikuh, in Arabistan, and in Bakhtiari country. Maintenance of close relations with Bakhtiariis is essential to both parties, and we must remember that Ispahan, Yezd and Kerman are now in the hands of Bakhtiari Governors. In the event of a collapse of the Government at Teheran, and the flight of the Shah, I think we should (? allow the) Wali of Pushtikuh, the Sheikh of Mohammerah, and the Bakhtiariis to declare their independence, or their separation from Government of Teheran, and should encourage them to make a three-cornered pact among themselves to stand together to maintain

⁸ The text is here uncertain. The text as received in Tehran read: '? necessary'.

⁹ See No. 640.

¹⁰ The text is here uncertain. The text as received in Tehran read: 'it'.

their own interests and resist Bolshevik aggression. We should probably (? do) well to have Kashgais . . .¹¹ in too. All four elements are mainly tribal and already practically independent. They would only need a hint to induce turbulent tribes to take action, but for us it would be important that they should act together. Such a confederation would offer a very formidable bulwark to Bolshevik aggression, as well as protection of our own material and legitimate interests in Persia. If this line of policy be favourably entertained, it seems to me that we should do all that is possible to expedite improvement of communications from south outwards, namely, from Khanikin to Kerman-shah, from Mohammerah to Khurumabad, and roads from Ahwaz, Bushire and Bandar Abbas.

I would venture to suggest that, if the above suggestions are considered to provide basis for any constructive line of policy, representatives of all the chief British firms with commercial stakes in Persia should be called together for discussion of the subject, in order that it may be known what amount of co-operation may be expected from them.¹²

(Repeated to Teheran 20.)

¹¹ The text is here uncertain. In the text received in Tehran this sentence read: 'We should do (?) probably well to have Kashgais in too.'

¹² Lord Curzon commented: 'Everyone, Mr. Norman, Govt. of India, Sir P. Cox—favours us with independent views. But as any one of them who wants anything done postulates the expenditure of money, which no one is prepared to find—the discussion is rather futile.'

'Of course Sir P. Cox is much nearer the mark than any of the others. C 10/2.'

No. 669

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 1, 12.5 p.m.)

*No. 71 Telegraphic [E 1435/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, January 30, 1921, 11.30 a.m.

Your telegram No. 50.¹

Does first paragraph mean that His Majesty's Government will allow no modification whatever? In that case I shall have to tell Persian Government that assurances to the contrary—which I was authorised by your telegram No. 422 to give them,² and which your Lordship yourself publicly repeated in your recent speech in House of Lords³—no longer hold good, and that it is therefore useless to form proposed commission to consider question.

It is doubtful whether any Government would be willing to submit Anglo-Persian Agreement in its present form to Medjliss, and still more whether any could be found with courage to defend it, so that, if submitted, its rejection by that body would be almost inevitable.

In either alternative we risk a rebuff, expose ourselves to the accusation of going back on our word and revive suspicion, so prevalent up till last summer, that we wish to rob Persia of her independence.

¹ No. 664.

² No. 540.

³ On Nov. 16, 1920. See No. 594, n. 3.

It will also be far more difficult to carry out instructions contained in your telegram No. 39⁴ and to make Persians believe that we are sincere in our professions of benevolent interest.

I venture to doubt possibility of leaving question of agreement in perpetual abeyance as contemplated in your telegram No. 24,⁵ for, until it is settled one way or the other, neither can Persia's relations with ourselves again become normal, nor, consequently, can she define her attitude towards Russian Soviet Government.

Solution must therefore be found, and if we are inflexible it must be one unfavourable to us.

If, on the other hand, we are conciliatory, we have at least some chance of success, and if we fail, blame will rest entirely on Persians.

I have already pointed out that proposal to engage Belgians for army is unpractical because they could not reorganise it in time to repel invasion.

(Sent to India, No. 71, and Bagdad, No. 27, for General Officer Commanding.)

⁴ No. 659.

⁵ No. 647.

No. 670

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 6, 12.30 p.m.)

*No. 79 Telegraphic [E 1661/2/34]**

TEHRAN, February 3, 1921, 12 noon

Sir P. Cox's telegram No. 291 S. of 29th January to Secretary of State for India commenting on Persian situation.¹

As regards probability of a Bolshevik occupation of North Persia immediately after withdrawal of British troops, see my telegram No. 74 giving views of General Officer Commanding Norperforce,² which are shared by many Persians with whom I have spoken. No instructed Persian believes in good faith of Bolsheviks. It is, moreover, doubtful whether Russian Soviet Government have sufficient control over this so-called National Persian Army to prevent it from advancing, or, if they have, whether they will attempt to exercise it. If, however, they can oblige it to withdraw and decide to do so for the sake of appearances, they are not unlikely to encourage them³ to occupy Tehran, providing them with arms, and possibly even with Russian leaders, disguised as Persians, to help them to do so. This would be represented as a national movement which Russian Soviet Government had neither the right nor the power to suppress. Result might be even more disastrous to the capital than Bolshevik occupation.

¹ No. 668.

² Of Feb. 1, not printed. This reported a Bolshevik attack on Norperforce outposts near Naglobar on Jan. 30 and said: 'Consider the large number of Russians present an attempt at raising revolutionary army's morale and was a reconnaissance to find out if we are still in position . . . and strengthens my opinion that revolutionary army will come on when we evacuate Kasvin, and that they have no intention of evacuating Gilan according to their agreement.'

³ The text as sent read: 'to encourage the Jangalis'.

I do not anticipate that evacuation of women and children will have the effect foreseen by Sir P. Cox. They will only number thirty or forty at the most, and, as they will leave at intervals in small parties, they will pass almost unperceived. Should alternative plan which he proposes be adopted refugees could not, as he suggests, have protection of South Persia Rifles, because by that time this force will have ceased to exist unless His Majesty's Government modify what I understand to be their irrevocable decision regarding it.

On the other hand, the attitude of Imperial Bank of Persia, now happily changing, and of British commercial establishments here has already had, so far as North Persia is concerned, pretty much the effect which Sir P. Cox anticipates will follow evacuation.

I venture to express concurrence in paragraphs 2 and 3, which are in accordance with views already expressed by me.

Proposal regarding Anglo-Persian Agreement differs from that which, until lately, I understood His Majesty's Government to be willing to accept only in that Sir P. Cox prefers to speak of a new instead of a modified agreement.

Former formula might have the advantage of dissociating from the instrument the name of Vossugh-ed-Dowleh, whose connection with it was the original cause of its unpopularity. I am already trying to rally elements mentioned by Sir P. Cox in connection with first of the alternative policies which he recommends, and as it is essential to success of my efforts that Medjliss should not only be opened but really working as soon as possible, I am at present concentrating my energies on bringing this about, a task more difficult than is even yet realised in London. Change of Shahs⁴ may be necessary when British troops leave, and if regularly effected may take place without serious disturbance, but I do not believe in the possibility of a change of dynasty. Only alternative to present reigning house would be a republic, which it is to be feared would shortly assume form of a Soviet. Great difficulty is that all measures to be taken must be devised and carried out in agreement with a Government and Medjliss who know that any sign of Anglo-Persian co-operation may furnish Bolsheviks with a pretext for aggression, which for several months at least after withdrawal of British troops there will be no means of resisting. Feasibility of second alternative policy, which incidentally involves destruction of Persia as a State and surrender of a great part of the country to the fate described in my telegram No. 66,⁵ depends on willingness of His Majesty's Government to find further funds to an amount which it is not yet possible to estimate, but which might, in the end, equal the sum required, at present rate of exchange of 45 krans to the £, to keep Norperforce here for another six months, while producing a far smaller result from point of view of preservation of British interests, since destruction of those in the northern provinces, which has already begun, would not thereby be arrested.

(Sent to India, and Bagdad, No. 29, for General Officer Commanding.)

⁴ The text as sent read: 'Shah'.

⁵ No. 667.

No. 671

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 67 Telegraphic [E 1371/25/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 8, 1921, 2.15 p.m.*

My telegram No. 44 of 22nd January.¹

In view of the unwillingness of the Persian Government to devote any part of their funds now lying in London towards upkeep of South Persia Rifles after 31st March, we must now consider what steps to take to disband the force and withdraw its British personnel.

Your recommendations on this point are invited.²

(Repeated to India.)

¹ No. 661.

² Mr. Norman submitted a scheme for the continuation of the force on a reduced scale in his telegram No. 122 of Feb. 23, not printed.

No. 672

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 68 Telegraphic [E 1435/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 8, 1921, 3 p.m.*

Your unnumbered telegram of 30th January:¹ Anglo-Persian Agreement.

I must draw your attention to my telegrams No. 532 of 5th November² and No. 588 of 8th December,³ and must repeat that the time-limit has expired. For this responsibility rests with the Persian Government.

There is no reason to make any further statement to them at this stage. I await the opening of the Medjliss to see what attitude it will adopt.

(Repeated to India.)

¹ No. 669, which was numbered '71' in the Foreign Office.

² No. 576.

³ No. 604.

No. 673

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 69 Telegraphic [E 1382/2/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 8, 1921, 4 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 66 of 28th January.¹

I am endeavouring to hasten Major Noel's departure for Tehran, but in the meanwhile I can give no undertaking on the question of subsidies or royalties to which you refer.

¹ No. 667.

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 11, 11.15 a.m.)

*No. 92 Telegraphic [E 1864/2/34]**

Urgent

TEHRAN, February 10, 1921, 11.30 a.m.

My telegram No. 31.¹

Sipahdar has given me a copy of a further telegram from Mushavir-ul-Mamalak [Mamalek],² of which I will forward a translation by bag.³ It is dated 29th January and is distinct from those mentioned in my telegram No. 48.⁴ These latter, which were received in a very corrupt state and are stated to be unimportant, have not been communicated to me.

New telegram reports receipt from Russian Soviet Government of an official note stating that Russia and Azerbaijan are ready to evacuate Persia as soon as possible, but complaining that, as between two parties, the withdrawal of troops depends on that of troops of other . . .⁵ a commission pending their appointment to arrange the matter immediately. Soviet Government ask for consent of Persian Government to this proposal, so that they may at once send their representative on [the]² commission.

Though Great Britain is not mentioned by name she is presumably the other party referred to, so that His Majesty's Government may expect to receive, either direct from Soviet Government or through Persian Government, as soon as one is formed, a request that they will appoint a representative on proposed commission.

I trust that they will comply with this request, which seems to show that Soviet Government mean to observe their engagements towards Persian Government, an intention of which they had not previously given any sign.

On the other hand, they have (not: *sic*) [now]² in Gilan, according to latest reports, 7,000 troops, including 400 Russians, belonging to their regular army, 8 heavy guns, 2 heavy howitzers, 10 field guns, 43 [113]² machine guns and 300 carts for transport, which, especially last item, indicate a determination to advance as soon as our opposition is removed.

Telegram says that Russian Soviet representative in Persia will hold rank of Minister plenipotentiary, and that departure of mission, consisting of forty people, which was to have taken place on 29th January, has been postponed. It will travel by Enzeli, and Soviet Government state that a request has been made (presumably of His Majesty's Government) for a safe-conduct for it in the event of British troops being still at Kasvin when it passes through.

¹ No. 649.

² The wording in square brackets is that of the text as sent from Tehran.

³ Forwarded under cover of Tehran despatch No. 24 of Feb. 13, not printed.

⁴ Of Jan. 21, not printed. This reported the receipt in Tehran of two further telegrams from Mushaver-el-Mamalek.

⁵ The text received was here uncertain. As sent from Tehran this passage read: 'but suggesting that, as each of the two parties makes the withdrawal of its troops dependent on that of the troops of the other, a mixed commission should be appointed to arrange the matter immediately.'

Soviet Government have accepted all the amendments in treaty proposed by Persian Government.

Mushavir-ul-Mamalak [Mamalek]² states that treaty is being translated for signature, and that as soon as it is signed he will go to Berlin for a short time for medical treatment, and there, if Persian Government approve, buy a wireless telegraph installation for use at Resht. He proposes to come here for a few days, and then to return to Caucasus to conclude treaties with Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

(Sent to India. Copy to General, Bagdad, and High Commissioner and Norperforce.)

No. 675

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 12, 1.30 p.m.)

*No. 99 Telegraphic [E 1898/76/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, February 11, 1921, 6 a.m.

My telegram No. 89.¹

Chief manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia informs me that unless it is possible to make an alternative arrangement, presumably difficult to effect, the balance of oil money now lying to the credit of Persian Government at bank in London will be seized by latter to pay debts owed to it by the former.

I realise that in taking this step bank believes it is protecting the interests of its shareholders, but surely such a measure is injudicious even from that point of view if the bank hopes to continue to do business here for British merchants.²

It will only injure its prospects by increasing its already very considerable unpopularity, by supplying Persians with a motive for restricting their dealings with it as far as they can, by alienating Persian Government, who in retaliation may even illegally seize its property and annul its concession, and by helping to produce a situation in this country which must render its operations for ever impossible.

As a consequence of this measure financial position of Persian Government must become much worse than ever before, for their resources will be limited to a sum of about 350,000 tomans, now lying to their credit at the bank here, and their prospects of revenue to proceeds of southern customs, which must quickly dwindle, if they do not entirely disappear, as soon as British troops are withdrawn and South Persia Rifles disbanded.

As under such conditions none of the public services can be paid even to the extent they now are, danger of an internal Bolshevik revolution, for which a daily increasing number of agitators are actively working, will become more acute, and it is hard to believe, in the circumstances, any statesman will be willing to undertake the task of forming a strong Government, by which alone

¹ Of Feb. 10, not printed.

² In the text as sent there was no paragraph at this point: it read: 'here, for by acting thus it will only injure its prospects by'.

movement can be checked, or, indeed, any Government at all, nor consequently will it be possible to open Medjliss.

In view of present policy of His Majesty's Government, amply justified though it is by past events, it is already very difficult to carry out instructions contained in your Lordship's telegram No. 39³ and to persuade Persians that Great Britain has not lost all interest in Persia, but if in addition we actively encourage what will undoubtedly be regarded here, however wrongfully, as an act of simple spoliation, I shall be unable to convince them that we have not some sinister motive for ruining their country and my task will become altogether impossible.⁴

(Sent to India; repeated to Bagdad for General Officer Commanding.)

³ No. 659.

⁴ In his telegram No. 87 of Feb. 22 (not printed) Lord Curzon informed Mr. Norman that the Imperial Bank of Persia had agreed to reconsider the matter and added: 'In the meantime no definite issues will be raised until the Persian Government try to effect further transfers from London to Tehran.'

No. 676

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 14, 11 p.m.)

*No. 96 Telegraphic [E 1985/2/34]**

TEHRAN, February 11, 1921, 12 noon

My telegram No. 56.¹

I have thought it useless to report various phases of Ministerial crisis.

Persia has now been without a Government for nearly a month. Sipahdar has been unable to form one acceptable to the Shah and to His Majesty's Government, and there is little prospect that anybody else will be more successful so long as condition on which I continue to insist, in accordance with your Lordship's instructions and with interests of this country itself, that any Cabinet which takes office at once opens Medjliss, involves submission to that body of Anglo-Persian Agreement.

A strong reactionary Prime Minister, willing to resort to intimidation, might overcome existing opposition to opening of Assembly, and I have urged Shah to appoint one, but, though he genuinely desires to see it at work, he contends with much truth that such a step would arouse violent opposition, and refuses to take it unless supported by continued presence of British troops and by prospect of further pecuniary assistance for new Government. I no longer have the means of obliging him to accept my advice.

No popular Prime Minister would have the power, and probably none save Sipahdar even the will, to open Medjliss in present circumstances. Our enemies both within and without Medjliss are loudly demanding postponement and denunciation of agreement, and our friends are unanimous in begging us to save them from a position of increasing embarrassment by giving it up. A group representing fifty-five well-disposed deputies have now

¹ No. 663.

publicly declared themselves opposed to it in order to rebut charge freely brought against them of having been bribed by us to support it. This move alone would deprive it of any chance of passing which it might previously have had.

There is no doubt that if His Majesty's Government voluntarily denounce obnoxious agreement² chief, though not the only, obstacle to the opening of Medjliss would be removed.

In present circumstances Shah, who as usual is much frightened, may reach conclusion that the only way to end deadlock, which is becoming increasingly dangerous to public order, is to bring into power a Government who will brave us by repudiating it themselves.

Nosrat-ed-Dowleh has at last reached Tehran, and I shall see him immediately.³

(Sent to India; repeated to Bagdad for General Officer Commanding.)

² The text as sent read: 'denounced the Agreement, the chief,'.

³ Mr. Norman reported his interview with Nosret-ed-Dowleh in his telegram No. 107 of Feb. 16, not printed.

No. 677

*Memorandum respecting financial assistance for Persia by Mr. Armitage-Smith
(Received February 16)*

[E 1985/2/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, February 14, 1921

Sir Charles Greenway¹ makes two concrete proposals viz.:—(1) that his Company should advance (say) one and a half years' Oil royalty (2) that they should advance a substantial loan on the security of the Oil Royalty with a British Government guarantee. The conditions in each case are (a) the employment of a British Financial Adviser with some real power of control over Persian Finances and (b) maintenance of the South Persia Rifles. These proposals were drafted in my presence last week: they represent the result of my efforts to stir up the British Capitalists who are interested in Persia to a sense of their responsibilities now that political conditions preclude the continuance of British subsidies to Persia. Let me begin by putting out of court the big loan. This is not the moment for such a loan. Under present conditions any big capital sum would be wasted (or stolen) and I want to keep this oil revenue as the last security available for a big reproductive scheme, railway construction etc., if Persia can be saved. Also let me say that I gave no encouragement to the idea of a British Government guarantee. If Persia or any large part of it can be saved, the security of the Oil Revenue is adequate without a Government guarantee.

His first proposal, viz., the anticipation of about one and a half years' oil royalty income for the purpose of financing the South Persia Rifles is good. But it is necessary to supplement it and to see what is implied in the condition precedent, viz., some control by a British adviser over Persian finance.

¹ See No. 429, n. 1.

I submit the following premises as indisputable:—

(1) It is idle to talk of financial control without military force, to protect the central Government against revolutionaries, to maintain and enforce law and order, and to keep the roads open for commerce.

(2) The only organised and disciplined force in the country now is the South Persia Rifles.

(3) This force cannot operate for the present or in the immediate future north of Isfahan.

The conclusion I draw is that the only hope left of maintaining a central Government at all is to move it to Isfahan; to move up the South Persia Rifles to the ancient capital to render central Government possible, and to maintain and increase that force under its existing organisation.

I am aware that these conclusions in so far as they are political must be subject to revision in the light of the fuller knowledge possessed by the Foreign Office, but the political position is dominated by financial and military considerations.

If I may be permitted to develop this argument, I would do so in the following manner viz.:—

When I left Tehran I had framed proposals fiscal and administrative which in a full year would have completely wiped out the annual deficit; since my return I have provided the Government with a sterling sum (£1,000,000 less £192,000 already advanced) which at the present rate of exchange is equivalent to about Tomans 3,500,000.

Yet I learn that all this money is spent or earmarked; the recurrent deficit is greater than ever, and the Persian Government is again crying out for some extraordinary source of revenue to enable its administration to be carried on.

Thus during the last years no Tehran Government, whatever its political complexion, reactionary, liberal or coalition, has had the courage and sincerity to declare openly that Persia cannot stand alone, and that British help is to be welcomed: how much more improbable is it that such a confession will be made in the near future, when to the pre-existing difficulties there is added an intensified fear of Russia no longer counteracted in any measure by the presence of British troops.

In this period also the only semi-disciplined force in the North, the Cossack Division, has become a demoralised rabble; it has lost its Russian officers and the cowardice of the Tehran Government has prevented the substitution of British officers in their place.

Further an army of revolutionaries has been concentrated at Resht, and there is no force between this army and the capital, and there is no time now to move forces up from the tribes to protect the capital, even if there were on the part of the Government any desire for vigorous action, which does not appear to be the case.

In these circumstances it seems to me quite impossible for any Central Government to continue long to function at Tehran. A vitally important economic factor must not be forgotten. If panic or disorder paralyses the

Tehran administration the inhabitants of the capital will soon starve, for Tehran consumes but does not produce food: its people are only kept alive by the delicate organisation known as the 'Alimentation', and when the financial machinery breaks down grain will not come in, and there will be bread riots and a general exodus of all who can obtain the means of transport. For the rest the prospect will be revolutionary disorder and starvation.

If this forecast is correct either the Persian Empire must disintegrate, or an attempt must be made to carry on the administration of the country from some centre further removed from the forces of disorder concentrated in the north, e.g., either from Isfahan or Shiraz.

I have never seen cause to abandon the opinion which I formed at the outset that military and financial reforms stand or fall together; and if they are to stand they will advance concurrently.

Without military force adequate to protect the Government from destruction at the hands of revolutionaries, to maintain law and order, and to keep the roads open for commerce it is idle to talk of financial reform.

On the other hand financial reform both fiscal and administrative (for the moment chiefly the latter) is essential in order to provide the necessary military force.

The Persian Government after the expulsion of the Cossack officers had even at that eleventh hour a chance of creating the nucleus of that uniform military force which they profess to desire: they threw it away. The expensive national force, the Gendarmerie, is admittedly incapable of fighting and Colonel Starosselsky destroyed the Central Brigade so soon as a British General had begun to introduce honesty into its administration and discipline into its ranks. There remains, therefore, only one force under cover of which a Central Government can be re-formed and carried on, viz., the South Persia Rifles (about 6,000 of all ranks, costing about T. 3,500,000 per annum). The present position is that His Majesty's Government and the Indian Government have agreed to pay for that force up to 31st March next, but no longer.² The Tehran Government, which regards this, the only properly disciplined and efficient force in the country, with dislike and suspicion, as a quasi-British force, has squandered the resources which I begged them to conserve for its maintenance after 1st April next. But at all costs and by whatever means the army must be saved. Unless its organisation is preserved these 6,000 men will be thrown on the countryside with no means of livelihood except robbery; it will be impossible to get into or out of Persia; the Southern Customs, which are the sole security for the advances made by His Majesty's Government and British subjects, will be destroyed, and revolutionary disorder whether with or without Russian instigation will spread to the frontiers of India and the British sea-borne trade with the Gulf ports will disappear altogether.

Under these circumstances with great diffidence I venture to submit the outlines of a policy to which I have been led mainly by financial, but also (for the two are inseparable) by political considerations. This policy is as follows:—

² See Nos. 653 and 661.

1. Make the Government move to Isfahan. (I assume that the support of the Bakhtiariis could be obtained and that a skilful diplomacy could reconcile them with the Kashgais.)

2. Allow the Shah to leave the country, and thereafter forbid him to return. In order to preserve continuity and avoid a rude shock to popular sentiment set up a Kajar prince as Regent. (Personally I should set up one of the younger of the Shah's uncles . . .³) It would be desirable to administer all the royal possessions for the benefit of the State, placing the Regent on an allowance, with a view later to the sequestration of the Royal property and the institution of a modest civil list.

3. Increase the establishment of the South Persia Rifles (changing their name and incorporating tribal elements) and extend the sphere of their operations, so as to include Isfahan.

4. Recommence financial reform concurrently with the creation of the central Uniform force. If any man alive could do the military work it is General Huddleston.⁴

With regard to the primary condition prerequisite to this programme, viz., finance, I hazard the following suggestions:

(a) Let His Majesty's Government assert to the full its rights over the Southern Customs. These Customs are hypothecated for the service of various British loans with which I will deal in a separate memorandum.⁵ It will suffice to say here that the total amount now outstanding including arrears of interest and sinking fund is between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000. At present only £10,000 a month is being taken for the service of a couple of these loans, and T.100,000 a month is being taken (by the permission of His Majesty's Government) by the Bank for the liquidation of its floating debt (now about T.1,300,000). Before the Arab rebellion in Mesopotamia the Southern Customs were bringing in revenue at the rate of about T.2,000,000 a year. The yield of the Customs varies with political as well as economic conditions, and when public confidence is shaken the amount shrinks. No exact figure can therefore be given at the present time. Having asserted its right to receive the whole of the Southern Customs Revenue *vis-à-vis* the Persian Government, and having come to an understanding with the Bank as to the satisfaction of their claims (which raises a separate question of some difficulty) His Majesty's Government could then release all but £10,000 a month for the upkeep of the South Persia Rifles.

No burden would be thrown on the British Exchequer; on the contrary the policy which I am trying to sketch is in my opinion the only one which will enable the British Exchequer in the future to recover part of the £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 which otherwise must be written off as a bad debt—along with all the other British capital sunk in the country, by the Bank, the Railway Syndicate and private traders.

³ A personal reference is here omitted.

⁴ Lt.-Col. H. J. Huddleston, H.M. Acting Military Attaché at Tehran.

⁵ Not traced in Foreign Office archives.

(b) I am still not without hope that when the Government of India fully understands the hideous results of a complete abandonment of Persia and the disruption of the only disciplined force which can maintain law and order, they may yet consent to make a further contribution to the upkeep of the South Persia Rifles after 31st March. The cost of moving troops to the Seistan and Baluch frontiers, which would become necessary if the anarchy of the north is to be spread throughout the country, must be set against the continuance of the subsidy. Further, the loss of trade between Khorassan and India is a matter which might weigh with the Indian Government.

(c) His Majesty's Government have been so long-suffering with Persia that I hesitate to suggest that a continuance of any payment for the South Persia Rifles beyond 31st March next might not be inconceivable. Nevertheless it is relevant to the discussion to point out that the Southern Customs will become absolutely worthless when the South Persia Rifles are disbanded, and that the Southern Customs form the sole security of British advances now amounting to about £8,000,000 sterling.

(d) There remain the resources of private British capital. These may be summarised as follows:—(1) a temporary anticipation of the oil-royalty income of a year or a year and a half; (2) a considerable loan secured on the oil-royalty income with or without a British Government guarantee; (3) a cash payment in respect of mining concessions.

With regard to the third I am already in communication with Colonel Wallace and his group: but I would observe (a) that no cash payment would be made until the Concessionaire should have received a valid title and this could only be given by the Medjliss; (b) that though in course of time the Persian Government may realise a substantial income from the exploitation of the mineral wealth of the country in co-operation with a British Syndicate the immediate results in cash during the first few years from what must be a speculative undertaking would not be sufficient to help materially in the present difficulties.

With regard to the proposal to discount further Oil Revenue, whether for a short period, or by means of a substantial loan, subject to the condition precedent as laid down by the Chairman of the Company viz., adequate control over Persian Finance, I have already expressed my opinion. Military reform and military protection are essential, and the only hope of military reform now lies in the area of the South Persia Rifles and this again implies a Government functioning near the area which that force controls—i.e. not further North than Isfahan. I am convinced that no Government functioning at Tehran will, with the ever present dread of the Gilan revolutionaries and of invasion from the Caspian, ever listen to the advice or submit to the control of a British financial or military adviser. A Tehran Government may accept the presence of a British Financial Adviser so long as he can do nothing to hinder their peculations, and so long as he can be used as a decoy for obtaining support from His Majesty's Government or the Indian Government or the Bank or the Oil Company. At Isfahan a British Military Adviser and

a Financial Adviser working cordially together might conceivably be able to begin the work of reconstruction. The North is lost, at least for the moment. The South is not yet lost; but if nothing is done to maintain the South Persia Rifles after 31st March all British interests, political and commercial, are ruined. Let the North have its taste of Bolshevist rule; let the experiment of reconstruction be tried in the Centre and South. If it succeeds the Northern limbs may yet be restored to the body politic.

I am quite aware that this solution will be repugnant to many Tehran politicians, especially to the Ghilani landlords. But it is a mistake to identify this gang with the State. If they will not go south and form a government let them remain in the North and be murdered.

I will conclude by mentioning two difficulties which may have to be faced in the near future. (1) Unless some semblance of central government is kept up the revolutionaries may become first the *de facto*, then, by default, the *de jure* government of Persia, and if so the Oil Company will have to pay the considerable and quickly increasing royalty revenue to a hostile power which will not facilitate its operations. (2) There is nothing, so far as I am aware, to prevent the Persian Government raising from the nationals of the foreign and not too friendly power a very large loan on the security of the Oil Revenues (against the will of the Oil Company) with or without a comprehensive mineral concession. The results might be unpleasant.

To sum up:—

(1) Either Persia will turn for financial assistance and possibly for the help of military advisers to the United States of America, or (2) it will relapse into anarchy involving military expenditure by His Majesty's Government on the protection of the Oil Fields and by the Indian Government on the protection of the South Western frontier and the entire ruin of British political interests, or (3) His Majesty's Government must save Persia in spite of its rulers. The programme of leaving Persia to stew in her own juice is naturally attractive to a British Government whose benevolence and patience has met only with suspicion and deceit as a response.

But unfortunately British subjects and British interests would inevitably form part of the stew.

The only thing to do now is to concentrate on the Centre and South where some healthy limbs remain; and to accept Sir Charles Greenway's smaller offer combined with a seizure of the Southern Customs Revenue and any assistance that can be obtained from India. If General Huddleston can be set to work at Isfahan I shall be delighted to join him and co-operate with him. There is nothing to be done at Tehran.

SYDNEY A. ARMITAGE-SMITH

No. 678

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 81 Telegraphic [E 1985/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 16, 1921, 8 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 96 of 11th February¹ suggests that you entirely misunderstand our position. I am unaware of having instructed you to insist that any Cabinet that now takes office should summon Medjliss with a view to submitting to it Anglo-Persian Agreement. I am wholly indifferent as to whether Medjliss is summoned or not. When you were engaged in setting up or turning down Persian Ministries with a view to ratification of agreement, His Majesty's Government, though very distrustful of this policy, reluctantly acquiesced on the condition that the submission to Medjliss should be made before the end of the year.

That period has now expired six weeks ago, and since that date His Majesty's Government have taken no part in Cabinet vicissitudes at Tehran beyond hoping that Persia would somewhere or somehow find a decent Government, and deprecating the panic with which everyone at Tehran appeared to be unreasonably overwhelmed.

At the same time His Majesty's Government have not the slightest intention of denouncing the agreement themselves and of accepting thereby the responsibility for a proceeding the blame for which must rest exclusively upon Persian shoulders. Indeed it was the Persian Government installed by you in July last that opened its career by repudiating the agreement, which has been in abeyance ever since.

Believing, as we do, that the agreement, if loyally accepted and carried out, would have meant the salvation of Persia, let it be clearly recognised that its disappearance, whether by the expiry of the time limit or the act of the Medjliss, is their deed, not ours. As the former condition has brought about this result, there is now no need to trouble about the latter, and it remains for Persia, having rejected our assistance, to extricate herself in her own way. We have, however, observed no inclination on her part to surrender the one immediate material advantage which she obtained from the agreement, viz., an enhanced customs tariff, and we doubt whether the fifty-five well-disposed deputies who have now swung round will swing as far as to reject it.

(Repeated to India.)

¹ No. 676.

No. 679

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 19, 11.30 p.m.)

*No. 113 Telegraphic [E 2242/2/34]**

My telegram No. 96.¹

TEHRAN, *February 17, 1921, 5.30 p.m.*

Sipahdar, having at last succeeded in forming a new Government, presented his colleagues to the Shah yesterday.

¹ No. 676.

Cabinet consists of same Ministers as the last, except that Mohtashem-es-Sultani takes portfolio of Foreign Affairs, hitherto vacant, and that Vahid-ul-Mulk, who has lately thrown in his lot with Nosret-ed-Dowleh, retires. There have also been some exchanges of portfolios.

In view of fact that recent repudiation of Anglo-Persian Agreement by a majority of deputies of different parties² has destroyed all chances of its passing Medjliss, Sipahdar proposes two alternative methods of dealing with situation. One is to issue proclamation summoning Medjliss, in which he will state that, agreement being impossible of execution in its present form, negotiations will be at once begun between His Majesty's and Persian Governments with a view to conclusion of another 'more advantageous to Persia'; the other is to appoint commission, on which this Legation will be represented, to examine and report on question and to postpone opening of Medjliss until its report has been received.

He asked me which of these alternatives I preferred, and I replied my instructions did not allow me to accept either without reference to His Majesty's Government.

Nosret-ed-Dowleh suggests that reply of His Majesty's Government to Prime Minister's question should be delayed for a time. He thinks if this is done present Cabinet will be unable to maintain itself, and that when it falls he himself will be in a position to take office. Danger referred to in my telegram No. 107³ of denunciation of agreement by a weak Cabinet, which would thereby gain popularity and prestige, will be thus avoided.

(Sent to India and Bagdad; copy to Norperforme.)

² See No. 676.

³ Of Feb. 16, not printed; see No. 676, n. 3.

No. 680

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 20, 9.30 p.m.)

*No. 118 Telegraphic [E 2243/2/34]**

Urgent

TEHRAN, February 20, 1921, 12 noon

My telegram No. 114.¹

Prime Minister told me to-day that he had received through Persian Minister, London, a telegram from Mushavir-ul-Mamalik embodying an official proposal from Russian Soviet Government for immediate assembly of Mixed Military Commission at Kazvin or Tehran. He begged me to ask His Majesty's Government at once to agree and name their representative.

I replied that I had already recommended acceptance of proposal, and I suggested he should instruct Persian Minister to communicate telegram to your Lordship. He promised to do this.

It is noteworthy that proposal is made by Russian Soviet Government on behalf of that of Azerbaijan, and that according to it the former will not be represented on commission, which will consist of British, Azerbaijan and Persian representatives with Persian member as president.

¹ Of Feb. 18, not printed.

Prime Minister said that he had received a further telegram from Mushavir-ul-Mamalik pressing for immediate permission for Russian Soviet representative to come to Tehran.

He had replied that this permission could not be granted till after signature of treaty,² and that Persian Government could not for the present accept any responsibility for representative's passage through Resht and Kazvin, and that representative could not travel by way of Gilan so long as British troops remained there. He was therefore recommended to proceed through Khorassan. Further, Persian Government could not now provide transport for a staff of more than ten persons, so rest of fifty who had been appointed must follow later.

Russian Soviet Government have invited Persian Government to send a Governor to Gilan, and Prime Minister said that this would at once be done, observing that, if Governor were allowed to reach Resht and to work there unmolested, it would be proof of good faith on the part of B.L.S.³

(Sent to India and Bagdad, No. 49, for General Officer Commanding; copy to Norperforce.)

² The Treaty of Friendship between Soviet Russia and Persia was signed at Moscow on Feb. 26. An English translation is printed in *B.F.S.P.*, vol. 114, pp. 901-7. For the Russian text see *Dokumenty vneshney politiki S.S.S.R.*, vol. iii (Moscow, 1959), No. 305.

³ The text as sent read: 'the Bolsheviks'.

No. 681

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 22, 11.30 a.m.)

*No. 121 Telegraphic [E 2379/2/34]**

TEHRAN, February 21, 1921, 5.30 p.m.

Kazvin and Hamadan detachments of Cossack brigade, numbering from 2,500 to 3,000 men, with 8 field guns and 18 machine guns under command of Colonel Riza Khan,¹ marched from Kazvin on Tehran, and entered the town 21st February shortly after midnight.

While they were still encamped without the town, representatives of Shah and Cabinet, accompanied by two members of my staff, went out to ascertain their intentions and to dissuade them from entering the town. In the latter attempt they were unsuccessful.

Riza Khan said that Cossacks who had had experience of Bolsheviks and knew what they were, were tired of seeing one inefficient Government succeed another at Tehran where apparently nobody was making any preparations to oppose Bolshevik advance which would follow withdrawal of British troops. They were therefore coming to Tehran to establish strong Government, which would see to this matter. They professed loyalty and devotion to the Shah, but were determined to set aside the evil counsellors by whom he had been surrounded. They also professed goodwill to us and said that no foreigners had anything to fear.

¹ In his despatch No. 29 of March 3 (not printed) Mr. Norman referred to Col. Riza Khan, the future Shah, as 'an honest and capable officer without political ambitions'.

There was no force with which to oppose their entry into the town, and they encountered practically no resistance, but owing to an accident or a misunderstanding shots were fired from one police post, and Cossacks returned the fire, killing seven men.

They are now established in the town and have taken charge of all Government establishments.

Government have ceased to exist,² and Sipahdar took bast³ at Legation early this morning, but was induced to leave, and I have obtained assurance that he will not be molested.

Revolutionaries will probably choose Seyyid Zia-ud-Din⁴ as Prime Minister.

They say that, in spite of emptiness of Treasury, they can form efficient force without foreign pecuniary aid, as there is plenty of money in the country and they know where to look for it. In pursuance of this policy, they have arrested some of the rich men of the town, including, I regret to say, Farman Farma and his son, Prince Firouz, on whose behalf I am exerting my good offices.⁵ Other arrests made, which are those of intriguers, mostly anti-British, are cause rather for satisfaction than regret.

I saw the Shah this morning, and advised him to enter into relations with leaders of movement and acquiesce in their demands, which is his only possible course. I was able to reassure him regarding his personal safety, and, though frightened, he did not talk of flight.

(Repeated to Bagdad for General Officer Commanding, No. 50; Kazvin by post; sent to India.)

² The text as sent from Tehran read: 'The Government has ceased to work'.

³ A development of the right of sanctuary, *bast* involved the withdrawal of persons who believed themselves to have been wronged to some place of sanctuary until their grievances were satisfied.

⁴ See Nos. 401 and 599.

⁵ In his telegram No. 127 of Feb. 26 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported that he had 'made repeated representations to new Prime Minister' on behalf of Farman Farma and his two sons, Nosret-ed-Dowleh and Salar-i-Lashkar, and that he had 'obtained promise that their lives will be spared and claims against them presented without delay as soon as the government has been formed, after which they will be allowed to leave the country in safety'.

No. 682

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 88 Telegraphic [E 2243/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 22, 1921, 4.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 118 of 20th February.¹

It is quite out of the question that a British representative should take part in suggested Military Commission, which is apparently to be composed of representatives of Persian and Azerbaijan Governments, Soviet Government being excluded no doubt on the plea that it is not the Soviet who have invaded Persia.

¹ No. 680.

The British evacuation of North Persia is a decision arrived at by His Majesty's Government on their own responsibility and on its merits. It was long ago announced to the Persian Government and is now on the eve of execution.

We are unable to treat it as part of an arrangement involving reciprocal action on the part of others.

No. 683

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 25, 11.15 p.m.)

*No. 125 Telegraphic [E 2605/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, February 25, 1921, 11.30 a.m.

My telegram No. 121.¹

At suggestion of Seyyid Zia-ed-Din, Shah has issued declaration practically attributing *coup d'État* to himself and stating that, in order to put an end to continuous ministerial crisis and administrative indecision, he has appointed Seyyid Zia Prime Minister with full powers.

(Most confidential.)

Seyyid has made to me following confidential statement of his policy:—

He intends to appoint as few Ministers as possible, leaving most of Ministries in charge of their permanent Under-Secretaries.

Anglo-Persian Agreement must be denounced. Without such denunciation new Government cannot get to work. Denunciation will be accompanied by a declaration to the effect that this step implies no hostility to Great Britain, and that new Government will at once endeavour to attract her good will, which is essential condition of Persia's very existence.

Steps will be taken immediately to introduce into military and financial administrations a certain number of British officers and advisers on personal contracts and without any appearance of an agreement between two Governments; as little attention as possible will be drawn to activities of these persons.

Public announcement will be made that Persian Government propose to bring in advisers from 'different' European States.

French and Americans, and perhaps even later Russians, will be invited in small numbers to occupy posts in less important Ministries. The idea is to conciliate as far as possible other foreign Powers and throw dust in the eyes of Bolsheviks and native malcontents, while placing two essential administrations in British hands.

An army of 5,000 men is to be formed at Kazvin, and Colonel Huddleston will be asked to take command of this force, which is to take the place of our troops on Bolshevik front.

Swedish chief of police has been instructed to increase emoluments of his men and raise additional force of 500 men, nominally for protection of

¹ No. 681.

Legations, but really to control Soviet representative when he arrives and Bolshevik activities generally.

Swedish officer commanding gendarmerie has been ordered to remove incompetent or disaffected officers and substitute more suitable men and generally to put his force in order.

New Government wish to take over South Persia Rifles at their present strength, but on a reduced scale of expenditure and with as few British officers as possible—say, ten.

Seyyid is most anxious that British troops should remain at Kazvin for a few more months until their place can be taken by new forces to be quickly raised with the help of British officers. He points out that whole future of Persia and of Great Britain in Persia depends on a respite of a few months being granted to new Government to take necessary defensive measures criminally neglected by their predecessors. He urges importance of sympathetic treatment of Persia at this faithful² juncture when at last she is making real effort to set her house in order.

New Government hope to extract large sums from richer prisoners partly on account of unpaid arrears of taxes, and thus finance at the beginning their military and administrative effort.³ They hope that His Majesty's Government, when convinced of genuineness and practicability of that effort, will facilitate provision of financial assistance.

He said that in order to avoid existing hostility of Russian Soviet Government, it was of utmost importance that pro-British⁴ character of new administration should for the present as far as possible be disguised.

In conclusion, he said that if Great Britain wished to save her position here she must sacrifice shadow for substance, remain in the background and help Persia effectively but unostentatiously. He was sure that this policy would in the end gain for Great Britain most of the advantages she had expected to obtain from an impracticable agreement.

(Repeated to India and Bagdad, No. 58, for General Officer Commanding.)

² The text as sent from Tehran read: 'fateful juncture'.

³ In his telegram No. 149 of March 10 (not printed) Mr. Norman reported that the Persian Prime Minister had informed him that he had given the family of Prince Farman Farma 'five days in which to guarantee payment of 4,000,000 tomans. If they complied with this demand they would be allowed to leave the country at once under British protection, but if they refused they would have to bear the consequences.'

⁴ The text in the Tehran archives here has the following additional words: 'and anti-Bolshevik'.

No. 684

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 26, 6.15 p.m.)

*No. 129 Telegraphic [E 2625/633/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, February 26, 1921, 1 p.m.

As reconstruction of army is one of the most urgent problems for new Government, and as reconstruction is impossible without a minimum amount

of military stores and munitions of war, can you persuade War Office to agree to hand over to Persian Government on a valuation to be arrived at afterwards between Norperforce and Persian Government:—

(a) All surplus military stores and munitions of war now with Norperforce?

(b) All stores and munitions of war which, although not surplus, could be withdrawn from troops without reducing to a dangerous extent their capacity for self-defence during their withdrawal?

This applies particularly to field, mountain, Vickers and Lewis guns. In above connection presence of an organised Persian force at Kazvin should have some military value in covering withdrawal of Norperforce, and would reduce possibility of their being seriously attacked during their withdrawal.

(Repeated to Bagdad, for General Officer Commanding, No. 61. Copy by post to Kazvin. Sent to India.)

No. 685

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received February 27, 11 a.m.)

*No. 130 Telegraphic [E 2626/2/34]**

TEHRAN, February 26, 1921, 5.30 p.m.

New Government have reintroduced Mr. Balfour¹ into Ministry of Finance, where he is acting on a committee with the Under-Secretary and Chief of Customs, charged to effect drastic reduction of staff.

Considerable economies have been effected in administration of . . .² Department. It is proposed to cut all pensions and allowances of over 30 tomans a month. Prime Minister hopes that financial adviser will proceed to Tehran with the utmost speed, and promises to give him the full powers for which he asked.

All deputy Governors within a certain radius of Tehran have been dismissed, and their places have been taken by local gendarmerie commanders.

These posts were merely pretext[s] for patronage, and the economy which will be effected by this step is reckoned at 30,000 tomans a month.

Useless and expensive Ministry of Justice is to be dissolved and the judicial system reformed on a simpler basis.

Inspector-General of South Persia Rifles has been urgently summoned to Tehran to consult Government regarding taking over of South Persia Rifles. Muazid . . . Sultaneh³ is to be appointed Governor-General of Gilan, and to proceed at once through our lines to Resht. If Bolsheviks allow him to take over, he will then ask them to withdraw their troops. Mission will be the test of Bolshevik sincerity.

Steps have been taken to organise the Jangalis against the Bolsheviks.

Government propose to form three armed camps at Kazvin, Semnan and

¹ The Hon. J. M. Balfour, chief assistant to the Financial Adviser to the Persian Government. Mr. Balfour subsequently published an account of his experiences in Persia called *Recent Happenings in Persia* (London, 1922).

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'of Opium Department'.

³ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'Muazid-us-Sultaneh', Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in 1911.

Kum respectively to oppose advance from the north, and assure their rear and flanks, in order to facilitate, in case of necessity, orderly retreat to Ispahan.

Bakhtiaris have promised their support to the new Government. Shah states that provinces have returned loyal replies to his telegram (see my telegram No. 125).⁴

Perfect order reigns at Tehran.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 62, Norperforce and India.)

⁴ No. 683.

No. 686

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 1, 11.30 a.m.)

*No. 132 Telegraphic [E 2736/2/34]**

TEHRAN, February 28, 1921, 9 a.m.

Prime Minister has issued a long declaration, of which following are the chief points:—

1. Credit for establishment of Cabinet and reforming¹ Government is attributed to the Shah.
2. Liberation of country from the necessity of borrowing abroad.
3. Reconstitution of administration of justice and finance.
4. Division among peasants of domain and Government lands, and legislation for readjustment of relations between landlords and peasants with a view to improvement of position of the latter.
5. Establishment of schools for people.
6. Encouragement of trade and industry by scientific methods and improved means of transport and communication.
7. Establishment of municipalities.
8. Formation of an army, on which special stress is laid.
9. Eventual abolition of Capitulations as soon as courts can be established fit to protect the rights of foreigners. (Prime Minister has explained privately that this measure, to which consent of other Powers will of course have to be obtained, is necessary because Persian Government cannot afford to have numbers of Armenians, Azerbaijan[i]s, Afghans, and especially Russians, living in the country but independent of local jurisdiction.)
10. Reconsideration of some concessions granted to foreigners.
11. Freedom to seek help from any foreign Power.
12. Denunciation of Anglo-Persian Agreement. (This clause contains a warm acknowledgment of help rendered by Great Britain to Persia in the past and an expression of conviction that denunciation will remove all misunderstandings between the two peoples.)
13. Establishment of friendly relations with Russia.

Translation by bag.²

(Sent to India; Bagdad, for General Officer Commanding, No. 64.)

¹ The text as sent from Tehran read: 'establishment of a reforming Government'.

² Under cover of Mr. Norman's despatch No. 31 of March 1 (not printed) received in the Foreign Office on April 26.

No. 687

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 94 Telegraphic [E 2605/2/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *February 28, 1921, 2.30 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 125 of 25th February.¹

The situation at Tehran varies with such rapidity, and the elements of stability are so uncertain, that we cannot yet judge the likelihood of the present régime proving any more lasting than its predecessors.

I therefore prefer to watch events for the present and to maintain the principle laid down in my telegram No. 81 of 16th February as to the proposed cancellation of the agreement.²

Idea, however, of new Persian Government, that they can first denounce the agreement and then extract the main part of its advantages, seems to me fallacious. Formal denunciation, which is quite unnecessary since the agreement has never been submitted to Medjliss either for approval or disapproval, and has in consequence lapsed by the inaction of the Persian Government, is not disguised by statement that no hostility to Great Britain is implied.

There can at this date be no question of delaying the withdrawal of British forces at Kazvin.

(Repeated to India.)

¹ No. 683.

² No. 678.

No. 688

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 4, 12.30 p.m.)

*No. 135 Telegraphic [E 2883/2/34]**

TEHRAN, *March 3, 1921, 11.50 a.m.*

Your telegram No. 94.¹

It is, of course, too soon to guarantee stability of new Government, but it is safe to affirm that degree of success which they will be able to attain will largely depend on amount of help and encouragement which they receive from His Majesty's Government.

Further condition of success is denunciation of Anglo-Persian agreement, for as even Nosrat-ed-Dowleh, one of staunchest defenders, and others realise,² after taking stock of situation, no Persian Government could work nor could relations between the two countries become normal till that had ceased to exist, at any rate in name (see my telegram No. 107).³

I venture to demur to statement that new Persian Government still hopes to extract the main part of advantages of agreement, seeing that by denouncing it they forgo the loan of 2,000,000*l.* They do, it is true, still enjoy benefits of new customs tariff, and of these it would doubtless be perfectly legal to

¹ No. 687.

² The text as sent read: 'defenders, realised'.

³ Of Feb. 16, not printed. See No. 676, n. 3.

deprive them. Would it, however, really be in the interests of British trade to annul an arrangement which, though it imposes higher duties on British goods, was framed under British influence with a view to favour them as against those imported from other countries, and which, moreover, provides increased security for British loans?

On the other hand, though the agreement has nominally ceased to exist, reforms contemplated by present Government, some of which are actually coming into force, secure for Great Britain, without any expense to her, [the]⁴ most important advantages which it would have conferred on her.

Financial Adviser has been promised full powers; a British official is already working at Ministry of Finance⁵ and another at that of Public Works, and more will soon be introduced into both.

Prime Minister is determined to employ British officers for army, and a beginning will be made with the few at present available. These points having been secured there is little doubt that we shall eventually also obtain a footing in other Departments, where, though less pressing, it would still be desirable to have one.

New Prime Minister is the first who has ever seriously attempted to introduce reforms and thus put Persia in a position to help herself, and I trust fact that he has attained office by somewhat drastic methods will not prejudice His Majesty's Government against him.

Power could not have been wrested otherwise than by force from small gang of men either corrupt or incapable, or both, who have hitherto monopolised it and wellnigh ruined the country, and imprisonment and exile provide the only means of preventing them from regaining their former position and completing their evil work.

Some even of the old corrupt governing class welcome *coup d'État* and its results as Persia's last hope of salvation from Bolsheviks.⁶

New situation had been hailed with utmost satisfaction by British community here as the most favourable to British interests which could possibly have arisen, and I appeal to your Lordship not to allow resentment at abrogation of agreement, which those interests themselves no less than considerations of internal policy rendered absolutely necessary, to prevent His Majesty's Government from taking advantage of present opportunity by excluding from⁷ new Government all help and encouragement which they need.

Their most pressing requirement, a refusal to meet which may involve failure of their whole enterprise, is British officers. They ask that about twenty, practically all of whom can be obtained from number serving in Persia and possessing local experience, may be lent to them immediately, and I earnestly beg your Lordship to urge on His Majesty's Government immediate compliance with this request.

General opinion here, which I share, is that Persia now has her last chance,

⁴ This word was in the text as sent from Tehran.

⁵ See No. 685.

⁶ The text as sent read 'Bolshevism'.

⁷ The text as sent read: 'by extending to the'.

and that if it is lost nothing can save the country from Bolshevism.

In view of change in situation which has taken place since your telegram No. 81 was despatched,⁸ detailed reply to it appears superfluous.

(Sent to India. Repeated to High Commissioner, Bagdad, for General Officer Commanding.)

⁸ No. 678.

No. 689

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 97 Telegraphic [E 2736/2/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 3, 1921, 2.11 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 132 of 28th February.¹

My telegram No. 94 of 28th February has given you my views as to cancellation of the 1919 agreement.² If the new Persian Government persevere in this action, it must be clearly understood that loan agreement will be similarly cancelled, and His Majesty's Government will hold Persian Government responsible for the repayment plus interest of first instalment paid to their predecessors on conclusion of agreement, for which sum the then Finance Minister gave to Sir P. Cox formal receipt, and also for value of such arms as were supplied at request of the Persian Cabinet.

If present Government denounce unilaterally the 1919 agreement, it will of course be open to His Majesty's Government to denounce similarly customs tariff and revert to former duties of 1903 convention.³

Repeat to India.

¹ No. 686.

² No. 687.

³ See No. 372, n. 2.

No. 690

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 4)¹

No. 136 Telegraphic [E 2880/2/34]

TEHRAN, *March 3, 1921¹*

Prime Minister tells me that Shah has telegraphed to the King asking that British force in North Persia may remain till September.²

Shah is anxious that fact may not become publicly known on account of its possible effect on Soviet Government.

¹ The times of despatch and receipt are not recorded.

² No. 691 below.

No. 691

*H.I.M. the Shah of Persia (Tehran) to H.M. The King (Received March 8)*¹

Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 3091/2/34]

Copy

TEHRAN, March 6, 1921

Vu la situation présente dont Votre Majesté Impériale est bien au courant je trouve dans l'entente des deux Empires de prier Votre Majesté de bien vouloir ordonner que le départ des courageuses troupes Britanniques de Kazwine et de la Perse soit ajourné jusqu'au mois de Septembre prochain mon nouveau Gouvern[e]ment est en train d'organiser d'urgence les forces de l'expire [? empire]² et j'espère que jusque [sic] la date précitée des forces suffisantes les ont responsables [sic] pour occuper [sic] les postes que les braves troupes Britanniques évacueront je profite de cette occasion pour exprimer les vœux les plus sincères que je forme pour le bonheur de Votre Majesté Impériale et la prospérité de son Empire.

SULTAN AHMED KADJAR

¹ A copy of this telegram was sent to the Foreign Office by Lord Stamfordham on March 8 with the request for a draft reply.

² This suggestion is made in pencil on the filed copy.

No. 692

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 103 Telegraphic [E 2921/221/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 8, 1921, 9 p.m.

Your telegram No. 142 of 5th March.¹

Question of Shah's departure from Persia is matter which must be decided by him and his own advisers. The material difficulties, however, in the way of his proposal cannot be lost sight of: firstly, His Majesty's Government are not prepared to furnish any means of conveyance for him from Persia to Europe; secondly, withdrawal of British troops having been definitely settled for 1st April, arrangements for His Majesty's departure cannot be allowed to interfere with military movements. Subject to the above we see no inherent objection to his being out of the country, provided his Government is in a position to conduct affairs of State without reference to him. We should not, of course, be disposed to welcome him in England, knowing that his reasons for leaving Persia are purely selfish and are based on fear. Personally I doubt whether, should His Majesty once leave the country, he will ever be disposed to return.

(Repeated to India.)

¹ Not printed. In this Mr. Norman had reported that on March 4 the Persian Prime Minister had told him that he had been asked by the Shah 'to agree to His Majesty's early departure for Europe on grounds of illness and that he had replied that he saw no objection provided His Majesty's Government would allow it'. The Shah had subsequently personally asked Mr. Norman to recommend his request to Lord Curzon.

No. 693

H.M. The King to H.I.M. the Shah of Persia (Tehran)

Unnumbered Telegraphic [E 3091/2/34]

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 10, 1921, 1.15 p.m.*

I hasten to assure Your Imperial Majesty that my Ministers have given careful and sympathetic consideration to the question of my troops who have of late been able to assist Persia against foreign menace.

I thank Your Majesty for the confidence which you place in them and I regret that the requirements of my Empire absolutely preclude the possibility of their retention in Persia after the end of this month.

I am grateful for the good wishes which Your Majesty expresses.

No. 694

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 11, 12.25 p.m.)

*No. 150 Telegraphic [E 3146/2/34]**

TEHRAN, *March 10, 1921, 7.10 p.m.*

My telegram No. 125.¹

Persian Government propose to obtain if possible from Great Britain, at once, twenty officers to organise army and further assistants to the Financial Adviser up to the number of ten. They wish as little attention as possible to be drawn to the former proposal so as to avoid giving the Bolsheviks a pretext for aggression.

They will ask for fifteen more Swedish officers for the gendarmerie in the north. They quite realise that the Swedes now serving here are unsatisfactory in many ways and would like to employ British officers, but think it imprudent to do so in the north, at any rate for the present. They are unwilling to admit the nationals of any other Great Powers, such as the Americans, because, apart from the possibility of objections on our part, diplomatic difficulties might arise in certain contingencies, e.g., dismissal of an incompetent officer. These cannot occur in the case of the Swedes, in whose hands, moreover, the organisation already is.

They propose to employ a French adviser and four assistants in the Ministry of Justice and to ask the United States Government for the loan of an adviser on agriculture with a staff of ten.

Customs and posts will remain in the hands of Belgians.

(Repeated to Bagdad, No. 76, for General Officer Commanding; copy Norperforce.)

¹ No. 683.

No. 695

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 12, 11.30 p.m.)

*No. 156 Telegraphic [E 3188/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 12, 1921, 5.20 p.m.

My telegram No. 150.¹

Prime Minister points out that according to present arrangements time remaining before withdrawal of British troops will begin is very short, and that it is indispensable at once to start organising force destined to take their place at the front.

He begs therefore for early and favourable reply to his request for loan of officers, without whom work cannot be undertaken.

Colonel Huddleston is eager to lend his services immediately.

Prime Minister also points out that for prompt and successful prosecution of his administrative and military reconstruction it is urgent that he should be acquainted with attitude of His Majesty's Government towards general policy of the new Persian Government, since without moral support of Great Britain their programme cannot be carried out.

(Sent to India. Copy to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

¹ No. 694.

No. 696

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

No. 117 Telegraphic [E 3166/633/34]

Confidential

FOREIGN OFFICE, March 14, 1921, 12.45 p.m.

Your telegrams No. 129 of February 26th and No. 135 of March 3rd.¹

Army Council are strongly averse from undertaking responsibility regarding reorganisation of Persian forces either by loan of British officers or transfer of military stores. Any such action might and probably would lead to further military commitments of indefinite nature, for which neither funds nor troops would be available. Council consider it preferable to destroy such stores as cannot economically be brought away, rather than allow them to pass into hands of Persians, and thence possibly to Bolsheviks. In any case, War Office could not accept any responsibility for safety of any officers, nor carry out military operations in order to extricate them, should need arise.

Army Council consider formation of Persian force, officered by British, might appear to afford Bolshevik Government opportunity to refuse to carry out evacuation of Persia already promised, on grounds that our evacuation was merely a sham. Bolsheviks could point out that their own force now in North Persia is precisely similar in composition, and though conditions differ they are sufficiently similar for argument.

¹ Nos. 684 and 688 respectively.

I share these views of Army Council, and in these circumstances have to inform you definitely that His Majesty's Government are not prepared to meet wishes of Persian Prime Minister.²

² According to a note by Mr. Oliphant dated March 2 the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Winston Churchill, was 'strongly in favour of supporting Seyyid Zia-ed-Din with all the arms, munitions, etc., possible'.

In his telegram No. 183 of March 26 (not printed) Mr. Norman argued that the decision in the above telegram left the Persian forces 'in a position of marked inferiority to the enemy in the matter of artillery' and that it might 'easily cripple the defence of the capital'. He therefore begged Lord Curzon to use his 'influence with the War Office to induce them to modify their attitude'.

No. 697

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 16, 9.45 p.m.)

*No. 163 Telegraphic [E 3370/633/34]**

Clear the line

TEHRAN, March 16, 1921, 1.40 p.m.

Your telegram No. 120 encourages me to hope for a favourable reply to request of Persian Government,¹ and thus dispenses me, at least for the present, from trying to refute arguments advanced by Army Council which are contained in your telegram No. 117.²

I would venture, however, to point out some of the consequences which must inevitably follow maintenance of attitude adopted in the latter telegram.

Persian Government, having failed to obtain help from Great Britain, would feel obliged to abandon friendly policy of reliance on His Majesty's Government which they desire to adopt, and turn elsewhere for assistance.

They would prefer to apply for officers and munitions of war to another European Power, and the one which they would choose would probably be France, who is most likely to be able and willing to meet their requirements, and would be delighted to occupy position vacated by us.

If, as might still happen, French help were not obtainable in time, Persian Government would have no choice but to welcome Bolsheviks.

In neither case would it be possible for British advisers to work or for British officers to remain in South Persia Rifles if that force were maintained, while in the latter event all British commercial interests would also be ruined.

I beg leave to emphasise importance of early decision, seeing that, according to latest information which has reached me from General Officer Commanding Norperforce, Kazvin will be clear of British troops by 10th April and Hamadan by 21st April.

(Sent to India; copy to Bagdad and Kazvin.)

¹ This telegram of March 14 (not printed) referred to No. 696 and instructed Mr. Norman to suspend action pending further instructions.

² No. 696.

No. 698

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 121 Telegraphic [E 3336/25/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 16, 1921, 8 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 162 of 15th March.¹

In view of great importance of steadying position in South Persia and giving chance to efforts of new Ministry in north, Treasury have consented to find a maximum sum of 225,000*l.* to be expended upon South Persia Rifles, with a view either to ultimate disbandment of force or to incorporation in Persian army.² I have tried to induce Indian Government to take part in this expenditure, but in vain; and it must be regarded as final contribution on the part of His Majesty's Government to liquidation of present situation. Please consider and advise as to best disposition of this sum and period of time over which it should be spread.

¹ Not printed.

² See No. 661, n. 3.

No. 699

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 18, 1.10 p.m.)

*No. 164 Telegraphic [E 3418/2/34]**

TEHRAN, *March 17, 1921, 11.30 a.m.*

I have received note from Minister for Foreign Affairs announcing intention of new Government to denounce Anglo-Persian Agreement of August 1919.

He explains that this step is urgently required with a view to removal of misunderstandings¹ to which agreement has given rise and to consolidate between the two countries the friendship which has endured for over a century.

While acknowledging that agreement promised at the time when it was concluded many advantages to Persia, he says situation is so changed that these advantages are no longer to be looked for, and that enforcement of agreement as it stands might even endanger good relations existing between the two countries. I understand this . . .² to refer to possible effect of agreement on Soviet Government of Russia, but he explains it by saying that not only was Persia not prepared for execution of agreement, but that public opinion in Great Britain received it with hesitation and doubt. To this I would add that all unfavourable comments on agreement which have appeared in English press have been reproduced in local newspapers.

He renews professions of friendship and goodwill, and expresses hope that denunciation of agreement will prepare the ground for better relations and will not debar Persia from advantages to be derived from British advisers³ and British capital.

¹ The text as sent from Tehran read: 'this step is taken with a view to remove misunderstandings'.

² The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read 'argument'.

³ The text as sent read: 'from the employment of British advisers'.

Finally, he requests that he may be informed of view taken by His Majesty's Government of action of Persian Government.

Personally I am of opinion, as your Lordship is aware, that we have lost nothing by denunciation of agreement and that our assent to its disappearance will greatly enhance our popularity in Persia. New Government are already employing British officers in Ministry of Finance and . . .⁴ are earnestly desirous of employing British officers to organise the army, and of converting South Persia Rifles into a Persian force while retaining services of necessary complement of British officers, and are, I believe, prepared to employ British advisers in other departments.

I would therefore urge that an encouraging reply may be sent to message which I have delivered. Persian Government I know await your Lordship's answer with utmost anxiety. Reference to British capital does not foreshadow an early demand for pecuniary help from His Majesty's Government, but merely an eventual request that they will facilitate a loan from British sources. (Repeated to India.)

⁴ The text received was here uncertain. The text as sent read: 'British advisers in Ministries of Finance and Public Works. Cf. No. 688.

No. 700

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 123 Telegraphic [E 3399/633/34]**

Very urgent

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 17, 1921, 5.20 p.m.*

Your telegram No. 156 of 12th March:¹ Officers for service in Persia.

War Office could not compulsorily detail officers for service in Persia without incurring liability to send rescue party in case of need.

This is impossible. They are, however, prepared to permit officers to volunteer for service under Persian Government on following conditions:—

1. They must be volunteers.
2. There can be no question of sending an expedition to extricate them if they are in danger.
3. All pay, including allowances, contribution towards pension, &c., must be found by the Persian Government during the period of officers' employment under that Government, and no expense is to be chargeable to British army funds on that account. (Financial details of above to be worked out by respective branches of War Office and Foreign Office.)
4. While War Office will do its best to re-employ officers on expiration of period of service under Persian Government, Army Council cannot guarantee that they may not have to go on half-pay for a period. This last consideration does not of course apply to temporary officers.

You should explain matter to Persian Prime Minister, and state that, while His Majesty's Government are prepared to afford these facilities for employ-

¹ No. 695.

ment of British officers under Persian Government, it will be essential that rates of pay and conditions of service shall be settled satisfactorily to these officers. Necessary arrangements should of course be completed at earliest possible moment.

I am similarly prepared to entertain favourably question of financial assistants, and am telegraphing to Mr. Armitage-Smith at Bombay on subject.²

(Repeated to India.)

² Mr. Armitage-Smith had left England for India on Feb. 24 in the hope of being able to return to Persia.

No. 701

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 18, 10 a.m.)

*No. 167 Telegraphic [E 3403/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 17, 1921, 5.30 p.m.

My telegram No. 150.¹

Prime Minister asks me to inform your Lordship that he can really get to work within a month. He hopes to be able to save Persia and British interests there, but that² in order to attain this object he must have help of British officers and advisers. In order, however, not to excite hostility of Nationalists, who would allege that he was putting Anglo-Persian Agreement in force in reality while pretending not to do so, he wants to be able, when publishing a statement on the subject, to announce at the same time intention of Persian Government to seek help of experts from other countries also, but he does not wish to make this declaration till he is sure that His Majesty's Government have no objection to it.

He therefore begs for a very early expression of your Lordship's views on this question.

He points out that it will take long time to make necessary arrangements to engage non-British experts, so that in practice British will enter on their duties long before the others, which is what he wishes to happen.

He once more emphasises complete dependence of Persian Government on His Majesty's Government, and their determination to work in closest agreement with latter.

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Norperforce.)

¹ No. 694.

² The text as sent read: 'Prime Minister asks me to inform your Lordship that if he can really get to work within a month he hopes to be able to save Persia and British interests there but that'.

No. 702

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 18, 6 p.m.)

*No. 169 Telegraphic [E 3429/633/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 18, 1921, 2.35 p.m.

Your telegram No. 123.¹

I shall at once inform Prime Minister.

In the meantime may I hope for a reversal of further decision conveyed in your telegram No. 117 regarding sale to Persian Government of arms, munitions of war and military stores which they require as urgently as officers² (see my telegram No. 129)?³

(Sent to India; copies to Bagdad and Norperforce.)

¹ No. 700.

² No. 696.

³ No. 684. A quantity of surplus arms, ammunition and other military stores from the retiring British force was eventually handed over to the Persian Government.

No. 703

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received March 18, 8.45 a.m.)

*No. 170 Telegraphic [E 3438/2/34]**

Very urgent

TEHRAN, March 18, 1921, 5 p.m.

My telegram No. 164.¹

Prime Minister to-day reverted to question of denunciation of Anglo-Persian Agreement.

He said that he hoped I should be authorised to address to Minister for Foreign Affairs, in reply to his official note, a communication to the effect that His Majesty's Government concluded agreement because they believed it to be in best interests of Persia, but finding that it had failed to give satisfaction to Persian people, they did not insist on its acceptance by latter. They would not, however, allow incident to disturb friendship which had existed between the two countries for three centuries, but would continue to extend to Persia same sympathetic encouragement and assistance as in the past.

Prime Minister said that if he could publish a communication in some such terms as these it would at once add very greatly to our popularity and prestige here, and would also enable him to employ more British officers² and give more concessions to British subjects than was possible at present, when any favour shown to Great Britain laid him open to accusation of putting agreement in force surreptitiously.

I agree, and would add that, owing to his notorious Anglophilia, he is more open to such a charge than almost anybody in Persia.

(Sent to India.)

¹ No. 699.

² The text as sent read 'officials'.

No. 704

Earl Curzon to Mr. Norman (Tehran)

*No. 125 Telegraphic [E 3438/2/34]**

FOREIGN OFFICE, *March 20, 1921, 1.45 p.m.*

Your telegrams Nos. 169 and 170.¹

His Majesty's Government have never for one moment insisted upon acceptance of Anglo-Persian Agreement, either by Persian Government, Persian Parliament, or Persian people; and they are at liberty to dispense with it if they please.

It is impossible, however, for me to pretend that His Majesty's Government are unaffected by these events, or that they can exhibit enthusiasm at result. They have not lost their interest in Persian nation, and have given ample evidence of this feeling by their recent action as regards British officers, financial advisers and South Persia Rifles. Prime Minister must realise, however, that it rests with him, even more than with ourselves, to prove sincerity of friendship. There can be no question of releasing Persian Government from liability for 131,000l.,² or for repayment for arms, and in the event of their failing to fulfil promises, I have already indicated action which we should be compelled to take in respect of customs tariff.³

In existing circumstances there is no prospect of British Government loan.

If military and financial advisers are British, I should not wish to object to foreign advisers in minor Ministries, although the path of Persian Governments is strewn with wreck of similar schemes.

The upshot of my reply is that while we wish well to Persian Government and are anxious to assist policy of Prime Minister, it is from Tehran that evidence of cordiality must in the main be forthcoming.

¹ Nos. 702 and 703.

² See Nos. 582 and 583.

³ See No. 689.

No. 705

Mr. Norman (Tehran) to Earl Curzon (Received April 3, 6.15 p.m.)

*No. 192 Telegraphic [E 3955/2/34]**

TEHRAN, *March 31, 1921, 11.40 a.m.*

Your telegram No. 125.¹

Persian Government express gratitude for friendly intentions of His Majesty's Government.

They propose to recover the 131,000l. from persons among whom sum was divided, and repay it.

They have asked me for a list of arms supplied with a view to settlement of account, but as the matter has become somewhat complicated, I have some difficulty in complying at once with this request.

¹ No. 704.

Though I do not clearly understand what are the promises failure to fulfil which will entail abrogation of new customs tariff, I have conveyed warning as instructed. I still, however, think that for reasons given in my telegram No. 135² this measure would injure us more than Persians, whom it would be intended to punish.

As already reported in my telegrams Nos. 121 and 164,³ new Persian Government do not ask or expect British Government loan.

They have also asked officially for assistance of His Majesty's Government in connection with engagement of a financial adviser and about ten assistants, and I have replied that His Majesty's Government are favourable to proposal in principle and will comply with this request.

Finally, Persian Government have officially announced dissolution of South Persia Rifles and dismissal of British officers serving with that force, which will be incorporated in gendarmerie. At the same time they ask His Majesty's Government to facilitate engagement for gendarmerie of one lieutenant-colonel, one civilian accountant, fourteen officers on active list, three military doctors and three veterinary surgeons. Numbers asked for are based on a scheme drawn up by the Inspector-General of South Persia Rifles at the request of Persian Government. There is objection—of course, a mere formality—nine of these officers are already on the spot.⁴ I have replied that His Majesty's Government sanction this proposal. Object of nominal transformation of South Persia Rifles from a military force into a gendarmerie is to deprive Russian Soviet Government of a pretext for complaining that Persian Government are forming an army under British officers.

I have not yet received any official application for services of British officers for Cossack division, but General Officer Commanding Norperforce is taking necessary steps in the matter at request of Persian Government.

(Copies by despatch to Bagdad and Kazvin; sent to India.)

² No. 688.

³ Nos. 681 and 699.

⁴ In the text as sent this sentence read: 'Application is of course a mere formality because these officers are already on the spot.'

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